

MODERN SPAIN AND LIBERALISM

A STUDY IN LITERARY CONTRASTS

JOHN T. REID

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JOHN T. REID

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PREFACE

FOR WELL over a century Spain has been one of the forgotten nations of Europe. Taking little part in the councils of the "great" European powers, their armament races, and their diplomatic juggling, she has too frequently been dismissed as unimportant. Now suddenly Spain looms on the international horizon as a bloody battlefield on which defenders of various political faiths fight to the death for their convictions. The Iberian Peninsula, heretofore almost forgotten in the world press, becomes the subject of sensational headlines and lengthy dispatches. International prophets wonder anxiously if Spain is to be the Serbia of a new European struggle. The layman wonders why this strange country should assume such meteor-like importance for the peace of the world. But thoughtful people are beginning to recognize that the forces locked in deadly struggle in Spain represent with variations the same social faiths on which depends the future of all Occidental nations, and that, while conflicts between those faiths are foreshadowed in social tension throughout the Western world, in Spain they have reached a horrible climax.

No one who is vitally interested in the march of social change can ignore the Spanish situation, its implications and backgrounds. Yet we know so little of the backgrounds. Most of us are not aware of the long process of development which has prefaced the civil war in Spain. The following pages will give some idea of this development and will help to make clear the nature of the problems at the root of the present struggle.

I acknowledge with pleasure the many pertinent suggestions concerning the form and content of this study which were generously given by Dr. Alfred Coester and Dr. A. M. Espinosa of Stanford University.

J. T. R.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA
May 10, 1937

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MODERN SPAIN AND LIBERALISM

INTRODUCTION

It is MUCH easier to think about foreign countries in terms of conventionalized patterns than to follow patiently and scientifically the strange, complex designs of their national civilizations. Perhaps no nation has suffered more than Spain from the imposition of stereotyped patterns. From the French romantics to the Hollywood scenario writers, the conventional Spain has been a weird, romantic land, a dream country of moonlit patios, guitars played beneath mysterious balconies, voluptuous gypsy dancers with castanets, diabolic bullfighters, and semibarbaric music. It is a musical-comedy Spain, molded in the playful imagination of Théophile Gautier, gilded by the opera *Carmen*, fostered by innumerable, superficial travel books, and carried to the point of caricature by the cinema.

On a slightly more erudite plane there is another crystallized conception of Spain, the pattern woven by certain English Protestant historians. England's archenemy in the sixteenth century is still conventionally represented as a country of cruel, lazy fanatics, infested with bandits, incredibly backward, the priest-ridden opponent of modern progress. Each of these standardized attitudes toward Spain once had a certain basis in truth. But as generalizations they are oversimplified and distorted.

To many who held these stock notions the peaceful overthrow of the Monarchy in 1931 and the establishment of a Republic with an astounding Constitution came as bewildering and inexplicable events, which failed to fit either the romantic pattern or the medieval-Spain theory. Among the more idealistic there was forged a new legend: By some miracle, Spain had become for certain worshipers of liberalism "the white spot of Europe," the nation where reason

had triumphed, where statesmen were authors and philosophers, "a democratic Republic of workers of all classes" which had steered a triumphant course between the Scylla of Communism and the Charybdis of Fascism. But this illusion, for those who followed the trend of events in Spain, was quickly dissipated. Destructive strikes and riots in 1932-33 led to a conservative regime in November 1933 which repudiated most of the social ideals of the founders of the Republic. The revolt of the Asturian miners in 1934 showed that the Marxian elements in Spain were operating in no spirit of sweetness and light. And the events since that time have confused liberal observers even more thoroughly. On the one hand, Marxian ideas have grown apace among the Spanish workers and peasants and have been manifested with increasing militancy and determination. On the other, the conservative forces have rallied about standards which bear unmistakably the insignia of Fascism. What in the meantime has happened to the liberal's dream in Spain of a peaceful republic where social justice will spread through the Peninsula in the channels of reasonable evolution? Is Spain to follow in the footsteps of Italy and Germany? Is she destined to become a "Little Russia"?

Unfortunately it is at present idle to prophesy the future of the Spanish nation. But it is not idle nor impossible to attempt to understand the nature of Spanish liberalism and the intellectual atmosphere which fostered it. Such an effort would go far to clarify our thought concerning the Spanish social scene in relation not only to Spain itself but also to the fate of liberalism throughout the Western world.

Here we are going to approach the development of the liberal ideal in Spain from a somewhat indirect and special viewpoint—through certain aspects of modern literature. This approach may seem impertinent and foolish to historical students, accustomed as they are to thinking of political move-

ments in terms of external historical events placed in chronological sequence. But the approach to Spanish liberalism through literature has a peculiar application to Spain. Literary life in Spain for well over a century has been intimately linked with political life; political liberalism has been cradled and nursed in the literary cafés of Madrid, and the problems basic to that liberalism have provided inexhaustible subject matter for scores of Spanish novelists and essayists since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The evolution of ideas which led to the establishment of the First Republic in 1873 and of the Second Republic in 1931 was largely due to a group of literary intellectuals. The idea of art for art's sake, which in so many countries tended to separate literature from political activities, never conquered the Spanish literary scene. Consequently it is natural to turn to modern Spanish literature in an effort to interpret the essential nature of Spanish liberal thought.

Among the types of literary endeavor cultivated in contemporary Spain probably none has such pertinency to social questions as the novel. In its origin the novel was primarily a means of beguiling the time, of amusing and diverting its readers. But in modern times, in Spain as elsewhere, the scope of the novel is vastly widened. Representative novelists of modern Spain scorn the menial task of jester or talemonger; they profess to play the role of interpreters of their complex social scene and its problems. As such their works are of great importance to the serious observer of liberalism's fate in modern Spain. The novel reflects the social thought of both the author and his milieu in a peculiarly vivid manner. Fictional situations, involving the gravest problems of society, may display, as few other forms of literature can, the emotional and personal factors necessary to an understanding of those problems. Furthermore, the novelist is in closer touch with the sentiments of the people than the essayist, the poet, or the

philosopher by virtue of the nature of his art and his greater popularity.

For various reasons I have selected the works of Pío Baroja and Ricardo León as the nucleus of this investigation of the nature of Spanish liberalism. Because of the volume of their production and the respect and attention which their novels have won for them in Spain, they stand as representative of the reading tastes of a considerable number of Spaniards. Nearly all of their works deal directly or indirectly with social problems in their country, and yet each novelist has sufficient variety in his themes to provide a diversified selection of opinion. Perhaps most important of all, however, is the fact that they represent with some accuracy two very different social philosophies, each of which is significant in any attempt to understand the progress of liberal ideas in Spain. Generally speaking, Baroja's viewpoint is antitraditional, anticlerical, restless, turbulent; while that of León is eminently traditional and religious. Neither can be considered an entirely typical spokesman for a well-defined political program; and yet their pictures of the modern social landscape of Spain contribute knowledge essential for an intimate understanding of the factors involved in Spanish liberalism.

It is dangerous to proceed any further in our discussion of Spanish novelists and Spanish liberalism unless we pause to make clear our use of the word liberalism. It is tiresome and pedantic to insist unduly on definition of terms, but in this case we are dealing with a word which has been so bandied about in legislative halls, in the public press, and in the market place that its meaning is blurred by the very richness of its connotation. The all-too-usual result of the careless use of "liberalism" is obscure thought and vaporous talk.

There seem to be at least three meanings of the word which are worth distinguishing; these connotations are by no means unrelated to one another, and in fact are interdependent.

Liberalism is frequently used in a very general, broad sense to connote an attitude of mind, a *Weltanschauung*, not necessarily linked with a specific political and social program. It is in this sense that the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines the word: “. . . a belief in the value of human personality, and a conviction that the source of all progress lies in the free exercise of human energy; it produces an eagerness to emancipate all individuals or groups, so that they may freely exercise their powers, so far as this can be done without injuring others.”¹

It is evident that the essence of liberalism as thus expressed goes far beyond the nineteenth-century political movements labeled liberal. The realization of the value of individual personality, its development and perfection in this world, is a concept, basic to liberalism, which was characteristic of the intellectual currents of the Renaissance. Particularly did such an idea gain vital strength in the intellectual ferment of the sixteenth century. The geographical discoveries of that epoch acted as a powerful solvent for medieval crystallizations. Men realized the diversity and possibilities of the physical world and paid less and less attention to the authoritarian curtailment of personality characteristic of preceding centuries. A similar effect was wrought by new discoveries in science, particularly by the labors of Copernicus, Kepler, and Tycho Brahe. Ecclesiastical tradition was weakened, and some few men felt the exhilarating possibilities of unbounded human development here in this strange, amazing world. But still the hand of tradition was heavy; it was manifested in a hesitancy to question the Church and in the still lively interest in Aristotle and the other lawgivers of the ancient world.

The wonder and the intimations of freedom abroad in the Age of Discovery became definite and articulate in the rational

¹ Ramsey Muir, “Liberal Party,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th ed.), XIII, 1000.

attitudes of such seventeenth-century thinkers as Descartes and Francis Bacon. In their philosophy are found the theoretical bases of liberalism. Bacon, especially, explained the fundamental assumption of progressivism: that science, as an objective and experimental examination of nature, is independent of theology, and that its proper aim is the utilitarian one of the advancement of human, terrestrial happiness. Closely connected with this was one of the basic principles of Cartesianism, the concept of an ordered universe subject to law and not to an uncertain and quixotic providence. No systematic human progress can be envisaged through science, unless we are to conceive of the world as following uniform and invariable laws. Implicit in such assumptions is the insistence, typical of that century, upon the supremacy of reason, the rejection of belief on the basis of authority and tradition alone. The importance of Descartes and his philosophy for the later development of the eighteenth-century *philosophes* in France and their English cousins, the utilitarians, scarcely need be insisted upon here. The ideological bases of the more concrete political liberalism which developed later stem unmistakably from such stock.²

A second connotation of liberalism involves the more or less specific body of political and economic principles which in the nineteenth century was the particular manifestation and application of the spirit, the broad outlines of which I have given above. Many of these principles, forming the political stock in trade of the liberals, have their immediate origin in the theories of the *philosophes* and their inspiration in the ideals of the French Revolution. Others owe their existence to

² Concerning this conception of liberalism, see J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (London: Macmillan, 1928), pp. 50-64; J. H. Randall, *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), pp. 203-82; and H. F. Laski, "The Rise of Liberalism," *The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, I, 103-24.

the pragmatic experience of the English people in their struggle for rights and freedom. Within this definition are included the following items: (1) An insistence on representative government, based on the theory of popular sovereignty and natural rights. (2) Limitation of the powers of the state to a minimum, especially in the economic sphere. Laissez-faire economics, free competition, and individualism in business enterprise characterized liberal aims in the last century. On such principles, reacting against the restrictions of feudalism, were laid the basic foundations of modern competitive capitalism. (3) Faith in the possibility of definite progress through the advance of scientific knowledge and industrial development. (4) A defense of civil liberties—freedom of speech, freedom from arbitrary arrest, impartial application of the law, etc. These liberties, many liberals believed, were based on natural and inherent rights belonging to man as such. (5) Freedom in the exercise of worship, and generally a desire to abolish the secular power of the established churches through separation of Church and State. (6) Espousal of the doctrine of national self-determinism, resulting in the formation, for example, of the German and Italian nations. It is obvious that such characteristics of this historical manifestation of liberalism, based on the underlying conception of the value of the individual and his infinite possibility for development, largely represent a negative liberalism, an effort to free men from definite, existing oppressions, ecclesiastical or governmental.³

³ See J. Salwyn Schapiro, *Condorcet and the Rise of Liberalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934), pp. 3-7 *et passim*; L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (New York: Holt, n.d.), chapters iv and v; Guido de Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism*, trans. by R. G. Collins (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1927), pp. 350-57 *et passim*; and Benedetto Croce, *A History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by Henry Furst (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1933), pp. 3-19.

Important as such freedom must be, early nineteenth-century liberalism is sometimes a contrast to and even a contradiction of a third aspect of liberalism which may be called a modern and positive interpretation of the concept of individual freedom. According to the expositors of the new liberalism, to assure the fullest and richest development of the individual personality the mere attainment of personal liberty from oppression is not enough. It is also necessary for society collectively to provide the positive opportunities for individual development. The laissez-faire doctrine and the rejection of state interference in individual affairs was historically necessary for the development of our industrial civilization. The expansion of material wealth under capitalist economy has been due in part to the principles of early liberalism. But certain results have accompanied this expansion which actually curtail the possibilities of free and happy development among the masses of the people. These results are the widespread unemployment and periodic crises incident to our industrial system. The neo-liberals contend that it is the duty of the liberal state to attempt to correct, by as much interference as may be necessary, these maladjustments of the economic and social order, and thus provide a truly positive liberty for all. This, they say, the older conception of liberalism failed in the long run to do. Liberal opinion began sporadically to manifest in political matters such new aspects during the nineteenth century and more generally at the beginning of the twentieth. Naturally there have been varying specific manifestations of neo-liberalism, but in most cases its program has included definite measures of state socialism. In England the Liberal-Unionist party, for example, practically adopted in 1906 the immediate program of the socialistic Labor party, which advocated equitable distribution of land, anti-imperialism and anti-militarism, an enlargement of the free, popular educational system, state distribution of electric power, and an extension of

the regulative function of the state in industry whenever it should be for the real liberation of the common people.⁴

Clearly there is a contradiction between this conception of the state's powers and duties and the older liberal principles of noninterference. Possibly it is this contradiction which most intensifies the current confusion in our understanding of liberalism. A modern liberal thus summarizes the attitude of neo-liberalism: "It is the task of liberalism in the twentieth century to transform the political and economic order which had suited a society, newly-born industrially, but which no longer suits the mature industrial society of our time."⁵

Our discussion of the social aspects of the works of Pío Baroja and Ricardo León will have as its framework the important characteristics which belong to each of these meanings of liberalism. But we must always bear in mind that no final judgments concerning their attitudes toward liberalism should be essayed without first deciding to which concept of liberalism we are referring.

⁴ I note only a few of the many discussions of the meaning of neo-liberalism: Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-65; Ruggiero, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-94; John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1935); Gómez de Baquero, *Nacionalismo, hispanismo y otros ensayos* (Madrid: Historia Nueva, 1928), pp. 235-60; and editorial in *The New Republic*, LXXXI (1935), 290.

⁵ Schapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM IN SPAIN

THE CONNOTATIONS of liberalism which we have briefly reviewed represent mere abstractions, liberalism in a vacuum, as far as Spain is concerned. For while liberalism as developed in Spanish political and intellectual life of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries drew inspiration and direction from the general European currents of thought, it assumed a specific and peculiar character. Since most histories of European political thought neglect the rise of liberalism in Spain, it is needful to sketch its development in outline in order to provide a background for the social thought of Baroja and León.

The progress of the liberal ideal in nineteenth-century Spain is so enmeshed in an intricate maze of revolutions, *pronunciamientos*, clashing personalities, and made-to-order constitutions that it is difficult to follow the evolution of real liberalism. On every side one is confused by the military *coups d'état*, by the multitude of apparently petty squabbles, and by a violent and pervading spirit of partisanship. We shall attempt to follow rapidly the growth of the liberal spirit through the confusion, purposely disregarding many of the colorful side shows which make of Spain's modern history a vivid pageant.

During the late Middle Ages some of the Spanish states developed a system of vigorous municipal institutions in which were embodied a spirit of democracy and liberty almost unique in Europe. Through them the Spaniards cherished a tradition of personal independence and individualism which was proverbial. But with the final unification of Spain through the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabel, the foundations were laid for a regime of absolutism which was to obliterate almost completely the older democratic forms. Under Charles V

and Philip II political power was centralized to such an extent that the tradition of medieval democracy was reduced to isolated outbreaks, such as the revolt of the *comuneros* (defenders of local rights), or to a sporadic but persistent expression in literature. Absolutism continued in Spain in full swing for two centuries after Philip II. To be sure there was latent discontent, but no active opposition to absolutism appeared until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Liberal ideas began to filter into Spain during the eighteenth century. During that century the influence of France was manifest in every phase of Spanish intellectual life, and it was inevitable that the French Encyclopedists should find at least a faint reflection in Spain, in spite of the opposition of the strong traditional Church. A small, but growing number of Spaniards watched with interest the progress of the French Revolution and looked with impatience at their own out-moded system of absolutism. But by a curious accident of history this reaction against tyranny and oppression crystallized in Spain as a result of the War of Independence against the French, when the Spanish nation rose in a great burst of patriotic zeal to repel the invaders under Napoleon. In 1808, through the machinations of Napoleon, Spain was left without a ruler, Charles IV having abdicated and Ferdinand VII having been sequestered by the French. But, moved by a single purpose—to drive out the hated foreigners, local *juntas* (councils) sprang up all over Spain to conduct the defense of the country. This phenomenon was an expression of popular sovereignty and independence such as had not been seen for many centuries in Spain, and the confidence of the people in their own powers rose as they continued for six years to rid their land of the French invaders.

A central *junta* was created which arranged for the convocation of a national assembly of elected deputies in 1810. Radical in hue, this *Cortes* (parliament) assumed the sov-

foreign power of the land and proceeded to draft the famous Constitution of 1812. Thus the Liberal movement was born in an atmosphere of intense patriotism and zealous idealism. The *Cortes* of Cádiz was conceived for the organization of political liberty in Spain. This task was principally guided, not by the radicalism of the later French Revolution, but by the influence of British constitutional history. The British respect for tradition found its Spanish manifestation in the conviction of many that in wishing to throw off the yoke of absolutism they were only following the ancient Spanish tradition of democracy, a tradition supplanted in the sixteenth century but a moving element in the revolt of the *comuneros*.

The resulting Constitution was a document of enormous importance as an ideal for succeeding decades of Liberal agitation not only in Spain but in her colonies and in Italy. The Constitution was promulgated in March 1812; although it remained in force less than two years, its position as the keystone of later Liberal activities demands an inquiry into its fundamental principles.

Foremost among its objectives was the definite establishment of the popular sovereignty of the Spanish people: "The Spanish nation is free and independent and is not, nor can it be, the patrimony of any family or person" (Section I). The nation alone was declared to have the right to establish the fundamental laws. To provide for popular representation, a unicameral *Cortes* was established, with indirect election of deputies. Thus was the dragon of absolutism slain, at least in theory.

Another significant aim of the Constitution was to guarantee civil liberties. Even before the drafting of the document, the *Cortes* passed, among its first decrees in 1810, one granting the liberty of the press, although the measure was hotly discussed. In the Constitution itself we find that "the nation is obligated to preserve and protect civil liberty by just and

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wise laws" (Section I). Furthermore, it provided reforms of judicial procedure which would remedy the worst of the legal injustices of the absolutist regime, such as arbitrary imprisonment and arrests. It was the lack of liberty of criticism and of free speech and press which had oppressed liberal-minded people under absolutism, and the protection of these rights became at least a theoretical cardinal tenet of the Liberal groups.

The principle of political equality was asserted by granting the suffrage to all males over twenty-five years of age, by the abolition of certain fiscal exemption privileges of the old regime, and by the declaration that Spaniards of both hemispheres, including Spanish-American Indians, were Spanish citizens with full privileges.

The liberalism of the Constitution of 1812, however, not limited to a "negative" defense of liberties, in some respects envisaged the later "positive" trends of liberalism. It provided for the establishment of a plan for uniform public instruction (Section IX); it granted the *Cortes* the power to foster all kinds of industry (Article 131); and it recommended governmental planning of agriculture.

Although the *Cortes* passed certain anticlerical decrees, such as the abolition of the Inquisition, the restriction of the number of religious communities, and the expulsion of the Papal Nuncio, the Constitution itself did not reflect the attacks against the Church which were later to become so characteristic of the Liberal battle front. The Roman Catholic faith was declared to be the official religion, the only true one, and it was considered the duty of the nation to defend it to the exclusion of all other religions.¹ It is important to emphasize

¹ Concerning the Constitution of 1812, see H. Butler Clarke, *Modern Spain, 1815-1898* (Cambridge: University Press, 1906), chapter i; M. A. S. Hume, *Modern Spain* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1900), pp. 164-78; and Angel Salcedo Ruiz, *Historia de España* (Madrid: Calleja, 1914), pp. 530-57.

in this connection that during this period the Spanish Catholic Church did not play exclusively the role of the archenemy of liberalism. During the eighteenth century there had developed among some Spanish clericals tendencies which are often termed Jansenist. Many of them held that the Spanish bishops, as successors of the Apostles, have rights that were unjustly abrogated by Rome, and advocated more independence for the Catholic Church in Spain. In politics they frequently embraced democratic doctrines, believing that sovereignty is derived from the governed.² One of the men who exercised great prestige in the *Cortes* of Cádiz, Muñoz Torrero, was of this group, a priest from Extremadura and the rector of the University of Salamanca. It is noteworthy that it was he who first declared in 1810 that the *Cortes* embodied the sovereignty of the Spanish people. During the famous debate on the liberty of the press he was one of the most fervent defenders of freedom, and he was joined by several other Liberal clericals—Oliveros, Espiga, and Ruiz Padrón.³ The first president of the Constituent *Cortes* was a priest. The part that these men played in the founding of Spanish liberalism is often overlooked in the anticlerical furor of the later phases of the movement.

There is no doubt that the *Cortes* which designed this document, amazingly in advance of its time and setting in some respects, did not reflect fairly the political sentiments of the majority of the Spanish people of the epoch. It was the work of a small and unrepresentative group of idealists, many of them literary men, and the bloody struggle to obtain in actuality even a part of the political maturity which they apparently took for granted was to last for more than a century. During this period the pendulum of political power oscillated

² Salcedo Ruiz, *op. cit.*, pp. 518, 521-23.

³ M. Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1933), VII, 44, 64-71.

between apparent triumphs for the principles of liberalism and the negation of such principles by the defenders of the conservative system. It is only in a long-range view of the nineteenth century that one sees the natural and slow growth in Spain of liberal institutions and the concomitant progress and change in the vanguard of liberal thought.

After the abrogation of the Constitution by Ferdinand VII in 1814, and until 1820, official Spain resolutely turned away from liberalism, and its existence was evident only in intermittent revolts. However, in 1820 a revolution, led by Riego, apparently frightened the King into accepting anew the Constitution of 1812 and calling a *Cortes*. This body, although its activities were shortly to be nullified by a return to an even sterner absolutism, was important in that it manifested the existence of a group of hot-blooded, radical Liberals, the *exaltados*. Since 1814 there had been a growth of Freemason secret societies, composed of fanatic radicals, deriving inspiration from the later French Revolution, and showing a much less Olympian and tolerant spirit than the framers of the Constitution. The native habitat of the *exaltados* was that curse of nineteenth-century Spain, the political club, with its impassioned and rhetorical orators. These extremists and the older Liberals disagreed sufficiently to cause a rift in the Liberal ranks which lasted throughout the century. And this difference was but the principal schism among the rebels; true to a tendency seemingly inherent in all movements toward new ideals, other factions were formed which fought among themselves.

The *Cortes* during the brief Liberal regime (1820-23) attempted to continue the labor of the Liberals in 1810: liberalization of the penal codes; establishment of a uniform public instruction and general amplification of education; suppression of the Jesuits; limitation of the power of the other religious orders and of the Church in general. The latter meas-

ures and others of an anticlerical character are significant because they indicate the growing tendency of the Liberals, especially the *exaltados*, to regard the Church in Spain as the greatest enemy of liberalism.

French troops, sent through the influence of an alarmed Holy Alliance, put an end to the *trienio*, and until the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833 the ideals of liberalism were effectively excluded from public life. During the thirty-five years following the end of Ferdinand's reign, including the regency of María Cristina (1833-40), and in the reign of Isabel II (1843-68), the struggle between the Liberals and the reactionaries in Spain is obscured by several confusing factors, namely the Carlist wars and the endless series of generals with their *pronunciamientos* and personal ambitions. Both the Queen Mother Regent and her daughter were conservative by education and temperament, and, especially under Isabel, there were long periods (1843-54; 1856-68) when conservatism was definitely and aggressively the master of Spain. But the necessity of defeating the even more absolutist Carlists brought about compromise with the Liberals, and the forms, at least, of constitutional government were upheld. In spite of the rulers, the principles of liberalism were evidently not dormant, and even through these turbulent years, scarcely one of which passed without bloodshed, the need for a more liberal government was realized by a slowly but surely increasing number of Spaniards. There are two historical moments in the period 1833-68 when this growing conviction was most significantly evident.

The first was the revolt of La Granja in 1836, culminating in the liberal Constitution of 1837. Instigated by radicals, the first measures of the revolution, after María Cristina had been forced to declare the Constitution of 1812, were directed against the property of the nobility and the clergy. The Constitution drawn up by the Constituent *Cortes*, which was the

result of the revolt, attempted to revise some of the clumsy and unworkable features of its famous predecessor of 1812. It is interesting to note that in the Constituent *Cortes*, side by side with anticlerical *exaltados*, there were a considerable number of progressive churchmen, who helped to forge the new liberal Constitution and even advocated such measures as the reduction of the number of priests and archbishops and a more liberal education for the clergy. While the Constitution was a genuinely liberal document, guaranteeing liberty of the press and the rights of assembly and petition, it did not satisfy the more radical Liberals; and the ensuing split was instrumental, along with the disturbance caused by the Carlist wars, in nullifying this Liberal effort and eventually in snuffing it out entirely. It was superseded by the arch-conservative Constitution of 1845.

After ten years of repression the voice of the liberal Spaniards was heard again in 1854, although in accents muffled by personal intrigue. A popular insurrection, whose immediate cause was several particularly goading measures of Isabel's conservative government, placed Generals O'Donnell and Espartero in power. These two warriors are the most prominent of the whole group of generals of those years who wielded tremendous political power, often with more personal ambition than idealism. It is possible that Espartero was a genuine defender of liberalism; but O'Donnell was really a Conservative and joined the Liberal coalition only through desire for power. While the activity of the Liberals in power during the two years of their government seems to be colored by petty personal greed, still we can see in it all the general outlines of the Liberal program—sovereignty of the people, liberty of the press, and all the rest. The Spanish nation was still pledged to defend Catholicism, but liberty of conscience was to be tolerated. The matter of Church lands, so persistent in the Liberal-Conservative battle in nineteenth-century

Spain, appeared again; the *Cortes* passed a law providing that the remaining huge tracts of ecclesiastical lands be sold at auction in small parcels so that the poorer classes could buy. However, Espartero's influence soon faded, O'Donnell and the Conservatives again took power, and the Constitution of 1854 was tossed on the sagging shelf of defeated Liberal documents.

To sum up the Liberal principles manifested during the period 1808-68, sifting the circumstantial from the essential, there are certain constants which seem to have been at the core of Spanish liberalism: (1) a demand for constitutional representative government; (2) a devotion to the principle of civil liberties, especially to that of a free press; (3) a desire to curtail the temporal power and wealth of the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, a tendency by no means always incompatible in the minds of the Liberals with a fundamental respect for basic doctrines of Catholicism.⁴

The revolution of 1868, a contrast to the other uprisings since 1812 because of the unanimity with which it was supported, was the final explosion of a long-growing and pent-up disgust with the vacillating and incompetent Queen. It was led by a coalition of many elements, representing all shades of dissatisfaction, from the conservative Constitutional Monarchists to a small party of Republicans. United to terminate the reign of Isabel II, they were too hopelessly divided among themselves to stabilize Spain in the face of the Carlist menace, although they immediately attempted some liberal measures. The seven years intervening until 1875 are in some respects a horrible nightmare of division and anarchy. The vain bickerings of the Interregnum, seeking an unemployed king for their dust-gathering throne, the desperate two years

⁴ For this period, see Hume, *op. cit.*, chapters ii-xii; Salvador de Madariaga, *Spain* (New York: Scribner's, 1930), chapter vi; and C. E. Chapman, *A History of Spain* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), chapter xxxix.

when the unfortunate, well-meaning Amadeo was buffeted about alternately by the Carlists and the Republicans, and, finally, the idealistic but defeated Republic represent the most turbulent and bewildering years of the century. However, they do provide the background for the appearance of a new and significant trend in Spanish progressive activity—the rise of Republicanism.

According to a modern English commentator on this period, "Spanish Republicanism is descended from the liberalism sown in Spain by the French Revolution."⁵ However true that may be, the original Liberals of 1812 obviously did not follow the Republican banner. In fact, until 1868 official liberalism never hesitated to endorse the principle of monarchy, however much they wished to limit its powers.

The radicalism manifested during Riego's rebellion in 1820 was in the genealogy of Republicanism. But it was in Catalonia, where politics and economic interests have so often been opposed to the rest of Spain, that the French Republican tradition flourished most vigorously. In 1842, during Espartero's regency, the existence of a strong democratic and socialistic party in Barcelona is first revealed. From then on it continued to make converts, especially in the latter years of Isabel's misgovernment; the radical activity was particularly powerful on the east coast of Spain and in Andalusia, although the sentiment of Andalusia, in general, was not so much Republican as Socialist. Its cradling in Catalonia gave Spanish Republicanism a regionalist and federalist direction which was to characterize its activity for many years to come. Both of the most distinguished leaders of the First Republic, Francisco Pi y Margall and Emilio Castelar, were proponents of the federal solution for democracy in Spain. They argued that "the federation of Spain must begin by the

⁵ J. B. Trend, *The Origins of Modern Spain* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 19.

constitution of the ancient Spanish provinces into organized autonomous states" and that "the diversified genius of the Spanish nation rendered it peculiarly apt to the federal solution."⁸ Such a plan, they said, would do away with the military rule and corrupt central bureaucracy, which were the chief evils of Spain.

There were even more profound differences than the form of government between the Republicans and their Liberal and *Progresista* cousins. The Liberals had by 1870 become primarily a political group. The Republicans, on the other hand, were captained by a cluster of university intellectuals: Nicolás Salmerón, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, Castelar, Fernando de Castro, and others. These men were held together in a common humanitarian idealism by their leader and prophet, Sanz del Río, professor of philosophy in the University of Madrid. Fostered in the radical implications of Kant's philosophy and that peculiar Spanish version of nineteenth-century German philosophy known as *Krausismo*, they represented a definite break with the orthodox philosophy of ecclesiastical Spain. They realized that the future of liberalism in Spain lay in the spread of a secular education; they differed from the orthodox Liberals of their time in their more radical attitude toward the Church, believing that religion is purely a matter of the individual conscience and should be in no way connected with the state; one of their leading principles was the abolition of conscription in the army, the occasion of much dissension during the short-lived Republic; they advocated prison reform and the abolition of capital punishment; and they were filled with enthusiasm for social reform, often looking with sympathy on socialistic ideals. Most of these high dreams, in typical intellectual fashion, were not very specific, and when their Republic attempted

⁸ M. A. L. Fisher, *The Republican Tradition in Europe* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1911), pp. 311-12.

to put some of them into practice they were unsuccessful. Still the importance of this group can scarcely be overestimated. Their child, the First Republic (1873-74), was almost still-born, yet the force of their ideas has influenced liberal thinking in Spain ever since. The Institución Libre de Enseñanza, founded in 1876 by Francisco Giner de los Ríos, was a protest against the clerical control of education, and has done much to direct the thought of many young Spaniards in anti-traditional channels.⁷

With the restoration of the Monarchy in 1874 and the accession of Alfonso XII to the throne, the real importance of organized liberalism diminished rapidly. From that date to the years immediately preceding the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in 1923, the intense civil discord of the nineteenth century was replaced by comparative tranquillity based on compromise and weariness. Liberal and Conservative parties still existed, but they no longer presented the clear-cut battle line of democracy versus reaction. The two leaders of the Liberals and the Conservatives, respectively, Sagasta and Cánovas, agreed in effect to a regular and peaceful alternation of power between their parties. Both sides compromised, Cánovas by granting certain liberties, Sagasta by withdrawing his anti-clerical policies. The net result was a growing indifference on the part of the mass of people to government affairs and an effacement of any real distinction between the parties. On the whole, the tenor of government policy was mildly conservative, although universal suffrage was granted in 1889 and certain other aspects of the Liberal program were quietly and more or less ineffectively adopted, such as the re-establishment of the jury system, civil marriage, and a certain amount of freedom for the press.

⁷ Concerning the First Republic, see Fisher, *op. cit.*, chapter xii; E. H. Strobel, *The Spanish Revolution; 1868-1875* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1898); and Trend, *op. cit.*, chapters i-viii.

The Spanish-American War freed Spain from the burden of her troublesome colonies and opened a new era of economic development for her. Apparently in the face of the concrete task of building up her material resources some of the old questions which had so aroused the nineteenth-century Liberals either worked themselves out in the course of time, were forgotten, or assumed different forms. In the stress of rapidly changing social and economic conditions the flaming torch of reform which the Liberals had borne in the last century was passed on to newer groups. For the most part these groups followed in the general traditions of the older liberalism, but evolved new attitudes to meet the social problems of the twentieth century. The most important of the successors to nineteenth-century Liberal parties in Spain were the Republicans and the Socialists. Of the two, the Republicans were undoubtedly the more direct heirs of the old crusaders for liberty. After the failure of the First Republic and the Restoration of 1874, the Republicans remained the principal opponents of the status quo. Their influence grew slowly through the first decades of this century and more rapidly under the repressive regime of Primo de Rivera. They attracted to their banner many intellectuals such as Joaquín Costa, Pérez Galdós, and Blasco Ibáñez. The Republicans, like their Liberal antecedents, often lacked essential unity in thought and action, and the development of their group was retarded by internal factions which differed in degrees of radicalism.

In a general sense, the Republicans have been a bourgeois party which could scarcely have been called radical in any country but Spain. Their program was based mainly on a desire to create a secular, civilian state which would embody the essential elements of democracy and some humanitarian reforms. They have never been characteristically interested in radical economic change, and are conservative from the point of view of a fundamental revolution of the social system.

Whether or not Spanish socialism may be admitted to the family circle of liberalism as a member in good standing is a nice question for academicians to wrangle about. The facts of the case are that socialism has been linked so closely to Republican liberalism in contemporary Spain that the two must be considered together in any examination of Spanish neo-liberalism.

Founded in 1879 by the revered father of Spanish socialism, Pablo Iglesias, the party was of comparatively negligent importance until the World War, when its growth began to keep pace with the exceptionally rapid industrialization of the country. Development of coal mining, textile manufactures, and electric power was accompanied by progress in railway construction and shipping. The economic consciousness of the working classes became keener, both in the industrial areas and in the agricultural regions. Through the Socialist trade-union organization, the Unión General de Trabajadores, Spanish workers became acquainted with a radical conception of social justice and freedom in a new economic order, a conception which contrasted with the bourgeois character of Republicanism. Under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera the Socialists, curiously enough, were tolerated and their party thrived. One of their leaders, Largo Caballero, was even made a Councilor of State by the Dictator-Premier. The latent political ferment under the Military Directorate made many converts to the Socialist party among workers and intellectuals.

Like most of the older Socialists, the Spanish Socialists held the abolition of capitalism only as a distant ideal. They were opposed to violent revolutionary action, confining their efforts rather to political activities leading to social legislation and to the disciplined organization of their trade-union.

After the breakdown of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in 1930 there were great sections of the Spanish people which

were discontented not only with conditions as they had been under the Dictator but also with the Monarchy itself. For the municipal elections of 1931 these elements were mobilized under a coalition of Republicans and Socialists. The results of the elections showed so decisively that the sentiment of the country was against the continuance of the Monarchy and for the establishment of a Republic that King Alfonso XIII felt obliged to desert his throne and leave the country. Almost over night and without violence a Monarchy centuries old gave way to a new Republic.

The men who took over the reins of government in the new regime had one thing in common—a hatred of the old order. Beyond that they represented widely divergent views. The Republicans were divided into conservative and radical factions, and a similar split existed among their allies, the Socialists. However, for about two years, the alliance held together through compromise and mutual forbearance. During those two years, first under the Provisional Government and later under a Constituent *Cortes*, the foundations for a new, liberal state were laid. The character of the new Republic was neither purely Republican nor purely Socialist. As legislation went forward, the differences between the Socialists and the Republicans became more evident, eventually contributing to the dissolution of the coalition and the capture of the Republic in 1933 by the forces of reaction. Nevertheless, the work accomplished between the establishment of the Republic and 1933 fairly represents the liberal aspirations of contemporary Spain.

Most of the important changes in the social life of Spain which were instituted by the Republican-Socialist coalition centered about four main problems: the position of the Catholic Church; agrarian reform; education; and the question of regionalism. A brief outline of the solutions offered for each of these questions gives a concrete idea of what neo-liberalism represented in Republican Spain.

Both the Republicans and the Socialists had definite anticlerical tendencies. They differed only in the severity with which they wished to curtail the secular activities of the Church in Spain. In this sense their attack against the Church in 1931-33 was a specific continuation of the liberal struggle during the nineteenth century. Complete religious liberty was proclaimed throughout Spain as early as May 22, 1931; but most of the anticlerical efforts of the Republic were embodied in the Constitution which was drafted later in the year, especially in Article 24. According to this document, the union of Church and State in Spain was dissolved; complete freedom of worship was established; the state subsidy to the Church was withdrawn; civil marriage and divorce were legalized; and, perhaps most significant of all, the *Cortes* was empowered to dissolve the religious orders and confiscate their property. Those orders not dissolved were forbidden to engage in commerce, industry, or education (except religious). The *Cortes* later implemented these provisions with laws, important among which was the one abolishing the Jesuit order and confiscating its property, estimated to be worth thirty million dollars. Seventy million dollars of wealth belonging to the order escaped confiscation, since it was invested in private enterprises. The conflict of opinion concerning the anticlerical legislation severely strained the bonds of union between the conservative and the radical elements of the coalition government and was a prime factor in the final breakdown of the group.

One of the principal reasons for the legislation against the Church was the desire completely to secularize education in Spain. Before 1931 both Church and state schools were to some extent under the supervision of the Church, and a good part of the children in school were in ecclesiastical institutions. About half of the population of Spain was illiterate, in spite of the progress made in education during the twentieth cen-

ture; many Liberals ascribed these conditions directly to the influence of the Church. At any rate, the new laws provided that instruction should be progressively removed from the hands of the religious orders and secularized. Provision was made for an unprecedented program for construction of new state schools, and from 1931 to 1933 over nine thousand new institutions were built by the government. The pay of teachers was raised, the standards of education were bettered, and the training of teachers was made more thorough and inclusive. Traveling educational missions to the rural districts were organized, carrying libraries, music, and other cultural advantages to the remote corners of the Peninsula. Every effort was made, through education, to raise Spain from the status of a most backward nation to that of a modern, literate republic.

Probably the most difficult problem which confronted the new government was the solution of the agrarian question. Over seventy per cent of the population depended on agriculture for their livelihood, and yet rural economic conditions were in a pitiable state. Part of the trouble lay in the nature of things: some regions of the Peninsula are little more than arid deserts, and a great deal of the soil is poor. But experts agreed that much of the misery and poverty of rural Spain could be mitigated by intelligent social action.

The problem had two aspects, the technical and the social. In many regions of Spain agriculture was carried on in a truly primitive manner; the yield could be greatly increased by the proper application of scientific methods of cultivation—rotation of crops, etc. But the most aggravating problem was that of land tenure. Through a series of historical incidents much of the best land was concentrated in the hands of a few large owners. This was true particularly in the south and west of the country, where the latifundia prevailed. The holders of these large estates were often absentee owners who took

little or no personal interest in the best social use of the land. As a result, a great deal of productive land was left uncultivated. The social consequences of such a system were bad. In a great part of Spain peasants possessed no land and either worked as day laborers at starvation wages or leased the land under unfavorable terms. In Andalusia, La Mancha, and Extremadura misery, poverty, and illiteracy were the rule among the agricultural laborers. The landlords often abused their power for political ends, and political bosses with their attendant perversion of democracy flourished in rural Spain.

Liberal reform had been directed to agriculture at various times before the establishment of the Republic, but with scant success. To confront the question of agrarian reform face to face was obviously one of the primary tasks of the liberal Republic. Shortly after the coming of the new regime, commissions were established to study the matter and prepare reports, and finally, in September 1932, the Agrarian Reform Law was passed. In order to provide a more equitable distribution of land the expropriation of most of the large estates in the south and west was ordered. Those belonging to the nobility were to be taken over by the government without compensation; the others were to be paid for at a percentage of the assessed valuation, partly in cash and partly in bonds. The land thus acquired was to become the property of the nation but was to be utilized by the peasants, either as individuals or as associations for co-operative or collective farming. An Institute of Agrarian Reform was created for the purpose of administering the law and was allotted fifty million pesetas for its task. In addition to dividing the land the Institute was charged with the responsibility of extending credit facilities to the agricultural workers, fostering new farming techniques through experimental stations and schools, and encouraging plans for irrigation. At the end of 1932 about three million acres of the best lands had been taken over, and plans called

for the expropriation of yet some fifty-two million acres more. The progress of the reform was halted, however, with the conservative reaction in 1933.

For both historical and economic reasons Spain is not a unified country. The diversity of cultural and historical backgrounds among the various regions of the nation as well as the variety of geographical features have fostered a sentiment of separatism in certain parts of Spain, especially in Catalonia, the Basque provinces, and Galicia. Many times in the past decades this sentiment has expressed itself in violent political agitation. Since some of these separatist groups lent their aid to the establishment of the Republic, the provision for some degree of autonomy for the regions became a part of the Republican program. Largely as a result of continual pressure on the part of the Catalonians, a statute was drafted and passed in September 1932 to provide for the government of that region. By its provisions Catalonia was declared to be "an autonomous region within the Spanish State," and wide powers were granted to the Catalanian government, including the control of finances, the administration of justice and social service, and the direction of education. This did not entirely satisfy the Catalans, but it was an indication of the new government's intention to deal liberally with regionalist aspirations.

A number of other reforms were introduced under the Republic which indicate the type of liberalism which dominated the minds of its leaders. Among them was a notable program of social legislation. Collective bargaining and social insurance were secured for the workers. The suffrage was granted to women. The army was reorganized to reduce the number of officers. Spain's obligations to the League of Nations were embodied in the Constitution. A vague provision was also made in the Constitution for the ultimate socialization of national industries "when the interests of national

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economy dictate." When one remembers that all of these projected social changes were enacted only after bitter debate and weary compromise among the divergent elements of the government, they appear the more remarkable.⁸

It will be observed that very little was incorporated in the program of the Republic which savors of real socialism. Although the Socialists had the largest single group in the Constituent *Cortes* (113 seats), they pursued a moderate policy which resulted in compromise at every step with the bourgeois Republicans. However, as time went on, the rank and file of the Socialists became restive; by the end of 1933, after the Right had gained control of the Republic, there was evident a large sector of the party which tended to reject parliamentary reform and accept the idea that power must be seized to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Overtures were made in some parts to the Communist party, which had been growing in strength, and in some cases a united front was achieved during 1934. The repression of the proletarian organizations which followed the abortive revolt in Asturias (October 1934) drove the Socialists even farther to the Left, although there still remained a nucleus which believed in evolutionary, peaceful tactics.

In contrast to the authoritarian philosophy of the Socialists and their concept of state socialism are the beliefs and tactics of the Anarcho-Syndicalists. John Dos Passos has said that Spain is the classic home of the anarchist, and much has been written of the natural sympathy of the Spaniard for anarchism, a sympathy which is said to derive from their reputed individualism. However valid such general state-

⁸ Complete and factual accounts of the reforms of the Second Republic may be found in B. W. Diffie, "Spain under the Republic," in R. L. Buell, *New Governments in Europe* (New York: Nelson, 1934); and E. Allison Peers, *The Spanish Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936).

ments may be, it is true that anarchist movements have gained great power among the Spanish workers in the last half-century.

The International Working Men's Association, with which the Spanish anarchists were later affiliated, was founded by Karl Marx in 1864, and was dominated by Marxian socialism until about 1869. At that time the communistic anarchism of Bakunin developed within the Association, and its conflict with the authoritarian doctrines of Marx finally in 1873 precipitated the disruption of the First International. While anarchism is much less a definite body of principles than an attitude of mind, its characteristic tenets include a hatred of any sort of repressive government, a naïve faith in the goodness of human nature when it is unshackled by authority and oppression, and a dream of spontaneous co-operation among individuals and groups, leading to a state of equality for all. Often the means sanctioned by the anarchist for the attainment of such a state have been violent and illegal.

In 1868 the ideas of Bakunin were brought into Spain by his disciple, Farinelli, and found fertile ground there during the unsettled and troublesome years prior to the Restoration. Anarchist ideas had sprouted particularly in Catalonia (in Barcelona and Tarragona), and to some extent among the agricultural workers of Andalusia. After the Restoration, the anarchist organization was officially suppressed. But from then until after the beginning of the twentieth century evidence of anarchist unrest was displayed in a series of bomb outrages, chiefly occurring in Barcelona. Particularly horrible was the bombing of the Liceo Theater in 1893, when twenty-three victims were killed and many others wounded. The government's repression of radicals of all sorts after these terrible events is almost as brutal a story as the dynamiting itself.

Such outrages led up to the *cause célèbre* of Spanish rad-

icalism, the Ferrer case. In 1909, as a consequence of the unpopular war in Morocco and of resentment to the suppression of liberties by the government, an epidemic of incendiarism broke out in Barcelona, during which some Church property was destroyed. The occurrence was considered to be the work of anarchists; an intellectual anarchist and anticlerical, Francisco Ferrer, was arrested and sentenced to death, although there was little actual evidence that he had participated in the affair. Considered by many to be unjust and prejudiced, the sentence not only caused international protests but became the rallying cry of many Liberals in Spain who objected to the extremes of the Conservatives. In this way anarchism contributed indirectly to the stimulation of anti-reactionary thought.⁹

Spanish anarchism has not been the strict philosophical anarchism held by intellectual rebels. It has been fused, among the Catalanian workers, with revolutionary syndicalism, based to a large extent on the ideas of Sorel's book, *Réflexions sur la violence*, which has given it a collective and organized character. Revolutionary syndicalism is an entirely nonpolitical method of attempting to bring about social change; it organizes the workers of an industry into militant trade-unions or syndicates, which are to form, according to their plans, the basis of the new society. Their weapons are sabotage, violent strikes, and the general strike. In Spain the Anarcho-Syndicalist trade-union has been the National Federation of Labor, known from the initials of its Spanish name as the "C.N.T." It was responsible for a series of strikes and threatened general strikes of a violent and sometimes revolutionary nature until 1923, when the organization was "driven underground" by Primo de Rivera's government. With the advent of the Repub-

⁹ See E. A. Vizetelly, *The Anarchists* (London: John Lane, 1911), pp. 80-84, 271-81; and G. H. B. Ward, *The Truth about Spain* (London: Cassel, 1911), pp. 133-43 and chapter xix.

lic, the C.N.T. resumed its activities and continued to embarrass the liberal government. Their protest in the form of strikes was one of impatience over the way in which, as they said, the new Republic had compromised with the forces of reaction. Early in 1936, fearing the imminence of a Fascist regime in Spain, some of them were induced to make common cause with Communists, Socialists, and Left Republicans, and to support the Popular Front, which triumphed in the February election.

Implicit in the preceding outline of liberalism in its early and recent forms in Spain has been the realization that it has encountered powerful and widespread opposition among some sectors of the population. The resistance to Liberal movements in Spain has been mainly crystallized about the religious question. When we recall that the Spanish nation was born in religious fervor and was held together during the period of its greatness by the unifying force of the Catholic Church, we can see how Liberal ideas, developed as they were in conflict with Catholicism, were forced to wage such a slow and discouraging struggle in Spain.

The Church has condemned the doctrines of liberalism in various encyclicals: "By proclaiming man's absolute autonomy in the intellectual, moral and social order, liberalism denies, at least practically, God and supernatural religion. It has been censured in the condemnation of Rationalism and Naturalism."¹⁰ The most outstanding Catholic document refuting the principles of liberalism and its related developments is the *Syllabus of Errors* issued with the encyclical *Quanta Cura* by Pope Pius IX in 1864. It is a list of eighty condemned propositions, among them the denial of divine revelation and the trust in human reason alone; the doctrines of socialism, communism, and Freemasonry; the theory that the civil power is

¹⁰ Hermann Gruber, "Liberalism," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, IX, 213.

superior to ecclesiastical power and may restrict it; the institution of civil marriage; the desirability of secular schools; and the practice of limiting or abolishing the religious orders.¹¹ In Spain, in spite of the fact that a number of priests were counted among the early Liberals, the Church's net attitude toward the various forms of liberalism has been unequivocally hostile, and official Catholicism has often formed the nucleus of the forces of reaction.

Perhaps the most notable of early nineteenth-century exponents of the Catholic position was Jaime Balmes, who achieved a certain international fame as a Catholic philosopher and moralist. Some of his ideas convey a brief summary of the salient objections of Spanish Catholic conservatives to liberalism. The ideals of the Liberals, inspired by the French Revolution, were to him a fatal anomaly in a country whose ideas, customs, and habits were profoundly monarchical and religious. The so-called Liberal revolutions had no genuine popular basis in the people of Spain themselves. According to his analysis, the War of Independence, from which Spanish Liberalism developed, was really a struggle for the preservation of the traditional religion and Monarchy against the encroachment of French influences. Consequently the Liberal program was in direct contradiction to the wishes and aspirations of the Spanish people.¹² The same ideas, according to which liberalism is regarded as a foreign importation incompatible with the Spanish temperament, have formed the background of conservative, traditional thought in Spain to the present day.

We have noticed the orientation of modern liberalism toward the social and economic problems of our industrial

¹¹ J. B. Bury, *History of the Papacy in the 19th Century* (London: Macmillan, 1930), *passim*.

¹² Jaime Balmes, *Miscelánea religiosa* (Barcelona: Imprenta Barcelonesa, 1912), *passim*.

civilization. It must not be assumed, however, that the Catholic conservative elements have been entirely indifferent to these problems. While Pope Leo XIII severely condemned socialism, he took official cognizance of the plight of the working man and of the Church's duty toward him in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891).

Under the inspiration of this encyclical a movement for Catholic social reform took form in Spain. Conferences were held concerning social problems and from them were born groups of agricultural syndicates and laborers' organizations. Their aim was to introduce the spirit of the Gospel, as interpreted by the Church, into agricultural and industrial relations, and to check the growing power of the radical unions. A National Catholic Agrarian Federation was formed, which had as its purpose the organization of rural credit, the collective purchase of fertilizers and implements, and collective marketing. In 1926 the value of the property of the groups amounted to over twenty million pesetas. Catholic labor centers attempted to combat the antireligious tendencies of the radical groups and to establish systems of old-age and unemployment insurance.¹³

Immediately after the coming of the Republic in 1931, the Conservative elements were badly disorganized. In the Constituent *Cortes* the opposition to the Republican-Socialist coalition consisted of a group of about sixty deputies with no unified program. But as the reforms of the Republic took shape and the decidedly anticlerical trend became clear, the defenders of the Church and the old order began to rally their forces and unite. In February 1933 a strong political united front of most of the conservative groups was formed in the C.E.D.A. (Spanish Federation of Independent Rights), the center of which was the Catholic Acción Popular, led by Gil Robles. Its purpose

¹³ Madariaga, *op. cit.*, pp. 208, 218; also Angel Marvaud, *La question sociale en Espagne* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1910), pp. 194 ff.

was to defeat the various reforms which the Republic had directed against the Church, the landholding classes, and the industrialists. Its eminent success at the polls in November 1933 initiated a period of intense reaction against the liberalism of the early years of the Republic which lasted until the pendulum swung again to the Left in the 1936 elections.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LITERARY ATMOSPHERE

SUCH ARE the milestones which mark the path of political liberalism in Spain. But, I repeat, those facts do not tell the whole story of liberal ideas in Spain. They are, in part, only the concrete manifestation of a rich vein of literary liberalism which is basic in modern Spanish ideology. A cursory review of some of the predecessors of Baroja and León in social criticism is indispensable to an understanding of the thought of the two novelists.

Since the Middle Ages a strong tradition of political protest and satire has played an important part in the history of Spain's literature. One does not often think of Spain as a center of Renaissance culture, yet certain of the Spanish humanists, such as Luis Vives and Francisco de Vitoria, shared in the Renaissance flowering of political theory; they spoke out so boldly concerning social justice and internationalism that even today their utterances seem advanced. Likewise, Quevedo and Mariana did not hesitate to criticize the abuses of the absolute monarchy even under the iron fist of the Hapsburgs. And the picaresque novels, so characteristic of the realistic side of Golden Age literature, often expressed or implied the bitterest criticism of contemporary social evils. Such criticism grew bolder during the eighteenth century, and became a virtual torrent during the nineteenth.

Among the best known of nineteenth-century liberal critics is Mariano José de Larra, who in many ways may be considered the grandfather of liberal intellectuals in modern Spain. Although he forged no body of theory and took an insignificant part in active politics, underlying all of his journalistic articles is the very essence of the liberalism of his century.

In the first place, Larra was what every liberal must be fundamentally—a clear-eyed critic of existing conditions. And he was a bitterly satirical one, too. His scalpel cut through many layers of Spanish life: the insincerity of high society, the lamentable taste of the public in literature and manners, the barbarism of the bullfight, the dilatory inefficiency of Spanish political and economic life, the absence of clear ideals in the confused political scene, the traditional lack of receptivity to foreign ideas of a progressive type, and the ignorance and ragged education of the masses.

His kinship with the French Encyclopedists, the fathers of liberal thought, is evident again in his patriotic hope for and belief in the possibility of progress for Spain. His criticism was seldom in the nature of a personal quarrel, nor was it the fruit of a jaundiced disposition; he criticized with a vision in mind of what Spain might be, cherished the *philosophes'* ideal of potential perfection in human society, and dreamed splendid dreams of reform for his country. It is true that after the blundering revolt of La Granja (1836), in which the Liberals showed themselves, through their dissensions, to be something less than his ideal, this faith in progress was almost snuffed out, and we hear the accent of despair in his works which preceded his suicide. But fundamentally Larra knew, as the more thoughtful of the Spanish Liberals must have known, that reform could come only through a slow change in the popular manner of thought by means of education. "We have painted the results," he says, "of this superficial habit of looking at effects alone, without remembering that it is necessary to begin with causes, to attempt to climb step by step. . . . Let us begin at the beginning: education and the spread of knowledge. Our building must be reared on this solid foundation."¹

No note is more recurrent in the essays of Larra or in the

¹ *Artículos de costumbres* (Madrid: La Lectura, 1923), pp. 83-84.

numerous manifestoes of the Liberals than the plea for freedom of speech and the press. They felt that an essential prerequisite to national progress and well-being was a free flow of ideas and criticism. Larra continually defends the free exchange of opinion: "In our opinion, men should know all sides of a question. Only in this way can they compare and choose."² His own sad experience with press censorship, which, by the way, has been the rule rather than the exception in Spain even to this day, gives his remarks an especial mark of personal sincerity. His own publications were frequently suppressed by the government.

The same spirit of toleration and its corollary, impatience with oppression, is basic to his attitude toward religion. In common with most of the Spanish Liberals of his day, he had a profound faith in the Christian religion itself. But he did rebel at its frequent companions—fanaticism, worldly ambition, and superstition. These prevented, he thought, the development of a truly liberal spirit among Spaniards.

From the bitter sharpness of Larra to the genial humanism of Benito Pérez Galdós, one of the most famous of modern Spanish novelists, is a far cry. But in a different fashion Galdós is as significant a figure for liberalism in literature as is the brilliant satirist. It is common to characterize Galdós' novels as the most vivid history of nineteenth-century Spain. Especially in his historical novels, beginning with the first work, *La Fontana de Oro*, and continuing in the lengthy series of the *Episodios nacionales*, he paints with warm colors a complete picture of the confused century, including the struggle between liberalism and reaction. On the whole, he does not attempt to glorify the Liberals or their cause; but occasionally, notably in the novel *Cádiz*, we see the historian giving way to the admirer of the leading figures of the Constituent *Cortes*

² *Artículos políticos y sociales* (Madrid: La Lectura, 1927), p. 300.

of 1812 and their efforts to swerve Spain from her traditional course.

Galdós' adherence to liberal ideas is more obvious in a trilogy of his early novels dealing with the religious question. Of these, perhaps *Doña Perfecta* is the best known. There in the character of Pepe, the protagonist, he embodies his symbol of antitraditional science, impatient with the bigotry of provincial Spain. Doña Perfecta represents the reaction against the new forces which were permeating Spain, a reaction which he considers the great enemy of liberal progress. The two characters find themselves in conflict on every point. Pepe contends that science is sweeping away superstition, sophistry, and the dead weight of the past. Doña Perfecta and her ecclesiastical friends feel, on the other hand, that science is destroying faith and the life of the spirit. It is through this clash of value patterns that the final tragic denouement is effected.

In *Gloria* Galdós deals with another aspect of the religious question, the conflict arising from the illicit love of two members of different faiths, in this case the Catholic and the Jewish. The implication of the novel is that the frustration of Gloria's love for Daniel and her subsequent death are to be laid at the door of the inhuman intolerance displayed by the Catholic protectors of Gloria. The lesson which the author draws is that men with their disputes have destroyed the true work of Jesus by their division into creeds, intolerant of one another.

Incidentally, the character of Juan de Lantigua in this novel is probably what Galdós considered to be a fair personification of the nineteenth-century conservative ideal: "His contemplative nature led him to consider religious faith not only as the supreme authority in the individual's conscience, but also as a principle of secular discipline which should forever direct human affairs. He emphasized authority at the expense of liberty." No more succinct and trenchant statement of the Liberals' criticism of the Church could be imagined. And yet

it is a commentary on the breadth of the author's spirit that Don Juan, although he represents a type of thought condemned by the author, is never painted as a malicious scoundrel but always as a sincere and well-meaning gentleman. Violent vituperation was not among Galdós' weapons.

Naturally his anticlerical novels received rough treatment at the hands of conservative and ecclesiastical writers, but even impartial critics believe that the books are greatly marred by their polemic nature and that Galdós produced his best work in his later novels, which are more broadly human in interest.

The reputation of Pérez Galdós as a liberal depends more on the play *Electra* than on any other of his works. The play itself is certainly no masterpiece of dramatic art. The characters are wooden and are sketchily portrayed; the dramatic tension is lessened by too much discussion, and the denouement, involving a supernatural apparition, is lacking in skill. But its theme, the attempt to balk the marriage of the young heroine to a man of science, representative of the progressive spirit, and her confinement to a convent by clericals through trickery, gave the play a polemic significance in the Liberal-clerical struggle.

The initial production of *Electra* in Madrid, in January 1901, occasioned a maelstrom of discussion. On the one hand, the Church thundered against it and attempted to have its presentation prohibited. On the other, radical groups all took *Electra* as their symbolic battle cry. Enthusiastic audiences applauded it in all parts of Spain, and twenty-five thousand copies were sold within a few months. The excitement caused by the play and its relation to contemporary conditions gave rise to disturbances of various sorts—strikes, attacks on convents, etc.—which resulted ultimately in the fall of a cabinet. The new cabinet (under Sagasta) was dubbed "Electra"!⁸

⁸ Havelock Ellis, "*Electra* and the Progressive Movement in Spain," *The Critic*, XXXIX (1901), 213-17; Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

Pérez Galdós presented only one side of the picture, however, in the late nineteenth century in Spain. Some of his novels spoke eloquently for the growing liberal aspirations of the Spaniards; but the forces of conservatism were strong and they, in turn, were represented by another novelist, in many ways as able as Galdós—José María Pereda. Throughout his life this great regional novelist was a sincere friend of Galdós, even though he opposed his ideology. Some idea of his social attitude may be gathered from his censure of Galdós' novel *Gloria*. In a letter to his friend, Pereda frankly condemns the heterodox tendencies in his novel. He complains that it wounds the tenderest part of religious sentiment—simple, unsophisticated faith—and urges Galdós to discard his liberal preoccupations. While he refrains from blaming the Liberals directly for all the ills of modern Spain, he notes with emphasis that the great days of Spain's grandeur were under the ideals of absolutism and Catholicism. This has been and is the cornerstone of the traditional viewpoint in Spain. Various of Pereda's novels express in satirical form his dislike for the new trends initiated by the *Cortes* of Cádiz. In *Don Gonzalo González de la Gonzalera*, for example, he demonstrates the absurdity of parliamentary democracy in a rustic village by following mercilessly the machinations of a political boss and his group of irreverent malcontents.

The group of writers whose literary fame commenced or flourished at the end of the last century in Spain are often loosely referred to as the "Generation of 1898," but the phrase has so many connotations that its use demands restriction and definition. In the first place these authors formed no definite literary or sociological "school." Baroja, who is usually included among the "men of '98," points out that Spanish literature, by its individualistic character and because of the comparative lack of a dense urban life in Spain, can only artificially be divided into neat literary schools. There is no common

ideal which binds such men as Angel Ganivet, Baroja, Valle Inclán, Joaquín Costa, and Unamuno together: "The only thing in common was a protest against the politicians and literary men of the Restoration."⁴ This protest was largely occasioned by the disaster involved in the Spanish-American War, and was directed against administrative corruption, nepotism in politics, *caciquismo*, bureaucracy, and grandiloquence in parliament and in literature.

In the second place the "literature of '98" may refer to two distinct things. Its literary phase, which is concerned with the introduction into Spanish letters of the "modernistic" technique and style, and which is manifested especially in Valle Inclán, Benavente, Azorín, and the Machado brothers, does not interest us here directly, for in the works of some of these writers politics was almost completely neglected; but the political criticism characteristic of the period, centering about the theme of the "regeneration" of Spain, is pertinent to our search for the literary attitude toward liberalism.

Since the critics of the so-called Generation of 1898 represent no school of thought the doctrine of which one can sum up in academic fashion, let us examine individually several of the outstanding men and their relation to liberal thought in its broader sense. This is important for the consideration of the authors who form the main interest of this study, since Baroja and León were nourished to a great extent in the atmosphere created by the *fin de siècle* critics.

One of the most suggestive and stimulating of these political and social critics was Angel Ganivet. Although he committed suicide in 1898, the influence of his writings on the young men after the Spanish-American War was profound. This fact is clearly indicated by the considerable bibliography

⁴ Pío Baroja, "Divagaciones de autocritica," *Revista de Occidente*, IV (1924), 47.

of commentary occasioned by his life and work which has appeared within the last two decades.

To find a clear and coherent statement of Ganimet's attitude toward the political and social questions of his time is no simple matter. His thought was typical of his generation—confused, sometimes contradictory, but always sincere. But there are a few constant threads of opinion which we may safely follow.

One of these was a profound feeling of inadaptability to and repugnance toward the *Zeitgeist* of his age. His lack of sympathy for the material progress and the feverish speed incidental to industrialism is evident in nearly all of his works: ". . . the cause of all our evils lies in giving to life an artificially accelerated pace . . . each individual lives like a machine spending his maximum of energy uselessly."⁵

The reaction against this type of activism, which he sees fully summed up in the North American business man, brought to Ganimet a certain sense of isolation from the currents of modern life and contributed to his definite vein of pessimism. "The best thing to do," he said, "is to step aside and keep out of the whole thing."⁶ This attitude, I believe, is the key to his political and social views, which we shall examine briefly.

The general attitude of Ganimet toward the question of social change is "traditional." By this term I mean that Ganimet replies in the negative to the central question of his time: Shall Spain open her doors wide to the rest of European thought and culture? Not that he thinks that there is no need of change; he is vividly conscious of Spain's retrogression and ascribes the decadence of his country to an unwise dispersion of her strength in a policy of expansion during the Golden Age. But Spain must turn in upon herself, search out the values that

⁵ *Epistolario* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1919), p. 280.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

are peculiar to her, and realize those values. And for the most part those values are spiritual and not physical: "All that is to be built in Spain as part of our national character must be founded on the bedrock of tradition. This is both logical and noble."⁷

We must recognize of course that this traditionalism of Ganivet differs considerably from that of the typical Spanish reactionary of the nineteenth century. There was no smugness in Ganivet's tortured and groping soul; and he was no supporter of clericalism.

One obvious element of Ganivet's traditionalism is his sincere distaste for the liberal democratic tendencies so characteristic of his century. This hatred of democracy is closely allied to his maladjustment to his environment mentioned above. He realizes that the evolution of democracy in Europe has brought with it a certain cosmopolitanism, a social solidarity, and a blurred line of demarcation between naturally unequal groups. He feels that he belongs to a group of spiritual exiles who do not fit into the social background, because he cannot accustom himself to rubbing elbows with the masses. Although he may like a folk song better than the composition of a genius, he is succinct and frank as to the masses: "Considering the people as a social organism, they make me sick; for it seems almost a crime that the masses should bother about anything but working and having a good time."⁸ His ideas about universal suffrage follow logically: "I am an ardent supporter of universal suffrage with one limitation: that no one vote."⁹ He believes that people *en masse* are fickle and unintelligent; that government should be left to the intelligent, thinking minority. It is not difficult to see his affiliation with Nietzsche

⁷ *Idearium español* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1928), p. 29.

⁸ *Epistolario*, p. 139.

⁹ *Cartas finlandesas* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1905), p. 102.

on this point, and his ideology even follows to some extent the superman doctrine: "Liberty must be sought in the power of strong men."¹⁰ He names Napoleon as the most truly liberal man of the nineteenth century because he was a man of great passions, ruling his flocks with an iron rod, and keeping himself free from the petty passions of the multitude.

Democracy not only is bad in itself but has brought greater evils in its train, among them socialism, at least in the orthodox form of the day. The loss of economic liberty under socialism would not alarm him as much as the possible loss of intellectual liberty. Moreover, the solution, according to Ganivet, is merely an economic one and would not change the fundamental fact that the mass is stupid and unappreciative; they would use the leisure gained under a socialistic system only for ignoble purposes.

From what we have quoted one might conclude that Ganivet at best was indifferent to social reform. This is not true. Although his positive ideas on what should be done to remedy the social maladjustments are nowhere definitely set down, and although one encounters numerous internal contradictions in his works, it is clear that Ganivet was not merely an advocate of the status quo. The basis of an ideal organization of society for him would be the town or *municipio*. Centralization has eaten away the old spirit of liberty which existed under the ancient Spanish village organization; with the restoration of the latter, a practical socialism could be established on a basis of mutual agreement, without authoritarian centralization. In a strictly local economy, he thinks the problem of sustenance could be handled easily. It is a utopian dream with a distinctly anarchistic flavor, in which the people eat and philosophers think. Cognizant of the social evils produced by modern industrialism, he struggles to reconcile a scheme of social justice with a belligerent sentiment of individualism. The result was

¹⁰ *Epistolario*, p. 130.

a fantasy far removed from the practical social and political realities of Spain.

Ganivet's ideology concerning the Church and Catholicism is even more difficult to trace than his other opinions. He himself was not a Catholic. But even so in the *Idearium español* he takes great pains to explain *con amore* the decisive role that Christianity has played in the development of those truly Spanish values which he esteems so highly. Mysticism, the poetic exaltation of the Spanish religious spirit, and fanaticism, the exaltation of action, he considers as the two original and vigorous creations of the traditional Spanish character. But because he feels that Spain has created a peculiar and valuable kind of Christianity, he resents its centralization in Rome. For the future of Catholic nations the abolition of the Pope's political power would be beneficial. Ganivet's ideas on the religious question differ widely from those of many traditionalists when he claims that force should never be used to conserve the unity of faith in Spain. He even goes so far as to assert that a few hired freethinkers and Protestants in Spain would be helpful to keep alive energetic thought and could do no harm, for they could only scratch the surface of solidly Catholic Spain.

In apparent contradiction to this, however, he states in his letters that the mass of people have lost all real faith in Catholicism and that in a few centuries it will only be a page in history. On the religious question certainly Ganivet was neither a typical liberal nor yet the conventional conservative. He was confused, as were so many men of his age.

Ganivet's ideas about feminism and the status of women are likewise somewhat contradictory. Here and there he expresses the desire to see woman freed from the traditional slavery to the household and admitted to a freer social life. But if this freedom involves "agitation for emancipation or revolution, it is better that she stay in the kitchen."¹¹ Essentially

¹¹ *Cortas finlandesas*, p. 147.

woman must occupy by her nature a position inferior to man's. If the day comes—and it well may, he says—when women enter freely into man's world, then he fervently hopes that a new barbarian invasion will replace a thoroughly ridiculous situation with barbarism pure and simple. There is an intimate connection between the growth of liberal democracy, so abhorrent to Gánivet, and the emancipation of women; and he reacted accordingly.

In his works a conception of education, another touchstone of liberal thought of the time, can scarcely be separated from Gánivet's general philosophy. The existence or nonexistence of a system of free, nonsectarian schools and the changing of the university structure are circumstances in themselves of little importance. Without being very concrete he always assumes that the only valid change in education is the transference of emphasis to the cultivation of the spirit and a weaning from habits of activism. There are some germs of distinctly anti-liberal doctrine in his writings. Academic freedom offers for him the danger of confusion caused by conflicting ideas meeting immature minds. Furthermore he denies that universal, obligatory education, which has been the dream of so many liberals in and out of Spain, can really assist the masses in appreciating and benefiting by any sort of a collectivist society.

While Gánivet's literary life was cut short in its prime, that of Miguel de Unamuno, whose torch was also lighted at the altar of "regeneration," persisted long after the turn of the century. His numerous essays on the widest range of subjects continued to be a quick-stinging hornet in the intellectual life of Spain from before 1898 until his recent death. I have taken the scarcely pardonable liberty of attempting to dissect aspects of Gánivet's thought and to pigeonhole him in relation to the tenets of liberalism. That task is well-nigh impossible with Unamuno. As if in scornful warning to our classifying fraternity he repeatedly insisted that he fled from any sort of

labels. He realized that doctrinaire liberals would dismiss him as a sheep of the reactionary fold and that conservatives would consider him an anarchist. Such superficial judgments, however, had little meaning or importance for Unamuno.¹²

His mission—he himself proclaimed it many times—was to break idols, to crack ossified ideas, “to combat all who become resigned to Catholicism, to rationalism, or to agnosticism, to make them restless and longing.”¹³

He shared this campaign of criticism with most of the authors of his generation, but carried it out on a larger battlefield and with a more vigorous sword. His hatred of conventionalities and hypocrisy led him to attack at one time or another both the liberal idea of progress and the Catholic conservative type of mind. Of the former he says: “Cursed be that which is gained by a kind of progress which makes us drunk with business, work, and science, and deaf to the voice of eternal wisdom which repeats the *vanitas vanitatum*.”¹⁴

He goes on to explain that progress is desirable only as it leads to the leisure necessary to contemplate and cultivate the “eternal needs.” He objects, as will every sane liberal, to the idea that material progress is an end in itself or that it is an abstraction to be worshiped, an idol. Two concepts dear to the heart of many a European liberal, happiness as a reasonable goal of life and science as a guide to the happy life, he rejects. Happiness is opposed to love, and science to wisdom; and he chose love and wisdom. On the other hand, he was no more sympathetic to the orthodox traditionalist of Spain, as his virulent opposition to the Monarchy and consequent exile eloquently demonstrate. Political principles as formulated in

¹² See *Mi religión y otros ensayos* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1910).

¹³ *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* (Madrid: Renacimiento, n.d.), p. 313.

¹⁴ *Ensayos* (Madrid: Residencia de Estudiantes, 1916), II, 169.

party programs of any hue had no validity for Unamuno: "The person that is to apply this or that set of theoretical principles of politics is more important than the principles themselves."¹⁵

His conception of the individual life and soul as the center of value is very near the heart of liberalism in its widest connotation, and yet his fear of the tyranny of ideas led him to shift emphasis from the ordinary liberal insistence on legal liberties to a more intimate cultivation of the spirit: "Liberty! Where the tyranny of ideas reigns there will never be true liberty, but only liberty before the law, for the law is the idea enthroned; as a matter of fact there is no human power that can really enslave and imprison another man; the free man, even though he may be laden with chains and manacles, will always be free. You talk of liberty and seek an external liberty; you beg for freedom of thought instead of making an effort to think."¹⁶

Certainly these words come from a mind which has gone far afield from the more orthodox liberalism of a Larra, for example.

Yet in the rich experience that Unamuno had in the field of political invective we see that his concept of liberty can be much more concrete than that expressed above. His polemics against the Monarchy and later against the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera were all based on a passionate and fierce love of a liberty of thought and action which he claimed the Monarchy crushed. Such protests were so pointed and vigorous that they resulted in his exile in 1924, at first forced and later voluntary. But even from France he continued his protest. On one occasion, apropos of the restoration of the remains of Gaiet to his native Granada, he said that they should not have been brought back until Spain had recovered her respect for

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, 118.

¹⁶ *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1914), pp. 223-24.

intelligence and her sacred liberty of free criticism. In theory Unamuno's liberty was only that of the soul; in practice he was the champion of a more pragmatic freedom.

However, Unamuno's opposition to Primo de Rivera and the Monarchy did not mean that he agreed with the Republicans. Even during his exile he wrote in a carefully wrought sonnet:

Liberals of Spain, courtiers
not of the sword, but of the showy plume,
at last I understand that you are not my brethren.¹⁷

Scarcely had the Second Republic been established when he began to attack its principles and methods. Especially did he object to the socialistic tinge, which he said would crush Spanish individualism.

Central in Unamuno's attack on the Monarchy was his fight against militarism, a struggle which he shared with representative modern liberalism. Particularly did he object when the army, through its military tribunals, became the judge of what is patriotism and what is not, repressing free discussion and criticism, so essential to the life of real patriotism. Also, like many Liberals, he had a clear insight into the relation between war and imperialism, between true "patriotism," and that preached by the jingoists and the vested interests. Condemning the "nationalistic, bourgeois nonsense about patriotism" as a manifestation of capitalism at its worst, he longed for the ultimate birth of a great human commonwealth which will be based on the free co-operation of the men of the land in all countries. These ideas, although they may not be consistently held or expressed in the espousal of a concrete program, link Unamuno to some extent to the neo-liberalism which we have previously mentioned.

Some of the most profound and important pages of the

¹⁷ *De Fuerteventura a París* (Paris, 1925), p. 72.

work of Unamuno are concerned with the subject of religion and its relation to philosophy. Those pages, which lead deep into metaphysics, need not concern us directly here. But his ideas about the Catholic Church as an institution are very pertinent to our thread of discussion. As one critic says, he is "resolutely heterodox."¹⁸ He recognizes in the Church the tradition of the Gospel of Christ, which is dear and sacred to him. But also in the Church he sees another element, forcibly and unfortunately grafted into the tree of Christian faith—Roman legal formalism. This, he says, accounts for the dry dogmatism of the Catholic Church, which he finds incompatible with his conception of faith: "sincerity, tolerance, mercy."¹⁹ Duty and legality, which are so intimately bound up with the Catholic tradition, have no place in the free warmth of Unamuno's kind of Christianity. In his best-known work, *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*, he repeatedly insists that Catholicism has erred grievously in attempting to rationalize a faith which can be understood only by the heart. In so doing, it has reared an amazing structure of doctrine which, however ingenious, can only leave an adult reason unsatisfied.

Furthermore, pure Christianity, according to Unamuno, should have no link with temporal institutions. Catholicism does: "The Jesuits, the degenerate sons of Ignacio de Loyola, come singing their tiresome jingle about the social kingdom of Jesus, and with this political criterion they attempt to deal with political, economic, and social problems; an example is their defense of private property."²⁰

Specifically, in Spain he criticizes the monarchical identification of Church and State: "The alliance between the Throne

¹⁸ M. Romera-Navarro, *Miguel de Unamuno* (Madrid: Sociedad General, 1928), p. 232.

¹⁹ *Ensayos*, II, 240.

²⁰ *L'Agonie du christianisme*, trans. by Jean Cassou (Paris: F. Rieder, 1926), p. 87.

and the Altar is, in the long run, fatal to both." Seldom is Unamuno vituperative of the Church, and there is nothing more important for him than what he considers the true kernel of Christianity; but he shares with Spanish liberalism a condemnation of the institutionalized Church in Spain.

Unamuno's life was one of apparent paradoxes. Certainly not the least of these was the last dramatic scene of his life. Regardless of his oft-expressed distaste for Spanish militarism, the institutionalized Church, and nationalistic patriotism, when the military rebellion of July 1936 broke out Unamuno favored the insurgents, hoping that they would save Spain from Marxism. His support was qualified with reservations, as we might expect. He did not necessarily believe in the conservative ideology of the rebels. As he said in an interview, the civil war is a conflict of political doctrines, "which are the negation of ideas." But at the moment he believed that the army was the only stabilizing force in the country and he preferred it, "as long as its triumph is not accompanied by a religious reaction, or rather by a reaction of fanaticism." It was not long, however, before he became disillusioned to some extent with the rebels. Having criticized some of their more extreme policies, he was deposed from the rectorship of the University of Salamanca. Shortly afterward the famous nonconformist died.²¹

Unamuno and Ganivet, although they began writing before the Spanish-American War, represent in an admirably typical fashion the spirit of critical revolt aroused by the disaster of 1898. Both have only the consistency of stimulation and of a negation of a scale of conventional social values which they detest. They are almost entirely negative liberals, if indeed the word can rightly be applied to them.

The last thinker of the Generation of 1898 with whom we shall deal here is Joaquín Costa, a name unfortunately little

²¹ Mérry Bromberger, "Con Unamuno en Salamanca," *Nosotros*, III (1937) n.s., pp. 78-82.

known outside of Spain. He not only represents the negative criticism of the other two, but also shows certain more definite constructive tendencies. Costa did not abstract himself from the tumultuous world as did Ganivet, nor did he play Unamuno's part of a predominantly destructive critic. His voluminous works had an intimate and necessary connection with his active life as a reformer and as a champion of progressive causes.

Yet, like his generation, his entire work had as a frame of reference a realization of the dolorous state of his Spain. He equals any of his contemporaries in his pessimistic view of the Spanish scene. "From the death of Cisneros the Spanish State has existed as if it were living in an endless Sunday."²² Spain is a hollow reed; her voting population is an "inactive mass"; her educational system perverts with a varnish of civilization; her parliament is made up of worthless youngsters who cannot make a living otherwise; Spain is a "dry river," and her agriculture scarcely repays the laborer's sweat.

As a remedy for such a dismal state of affairs, Costa advances a multitude of practical measures, most of them arising from a cosmopolitan conception of the new liberalism. All his ideas are based on the conviction that Spain must recast herself in the modern European mold. The material and spiritual progress which has characterized the more advanced countries of Europe must be fomented and fostered in Spain.

Perhaps the keystone of his plans for the reconstruction of Spain is a new, liberalized system of education. Not only should the money spent for cannon be given to the creation of schools, but the whole philosophy of education should be given a fresh orientation. According to Costa, the school and society cannot be separated. The wall which divides the classroom from life outside marks an artificial and pernicious boundary.

²² *Ideario español*, José García Mercado, editor (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1919), p. 247.

The social scene must be studied on the stage itself, and the public place, the fields, mines, factories, and the courts should be the direct raw material of the curriculum. The ideal teacher, the dynamic one, is the one who "teaches things by doing them," in whom life and thought are not divorced. His emphasis, like that of Montaigne and Rousseau before him, is not on book learning so much as on real education, the training of the whole man.

His specific recommendations for education in Spain include a reform of teaching personnel, a sweeping out of formalists and slaves of routine; the universities particularly should open their doors to more extensive scientific research. Centers should be established with fellowships in progressive universities abroad so that Spaniards may return to Spain as properly trained chemists, engineers, agronomists, etc., to undertake the enormous task of rebuilding their native land. The basis of such educational reforms would be the complete secularization of the schools.

Costa was a fervent disciple of liberty, but he took care to define liberty in a much more concrete manner than did most of the Liberal manifestoes of Spain in the nineteenth century: ". . . the source of liberty is in independence and the root of independence is in the stomach."²³ In other words no man can be truly free, regardless of his legal status, if he is oppressed by dire economic poverty. Consequently, liberty in Spain for Costa was inescapably bound up with agriculture: irrigation, new methods of scientific cultivation and fertilizing, agricultural credit, the question of the latifundia, and others. Closely related is the need of reforestation, which in Costa's opinion was ultimately fundamental in the fight against hunger. Although apparently of less interest to him, social-security legislation to provide the beginning of economic freedom for the industrial worker is envisaged in his plan of reconstruction.

²³ *Ideario español*, p. 177.

Costa's papers and books cover scores of concrete proposals for the betterment of the social life of Spain. The trend of most of them has been indicated in his ideas on education and hunger, "school and pantry," as he phrased it. It is of some importance to inquire how such reforms were to be brought about, what were the means of execution. Certainly not the government of the Bourbon dynasty, he continually insisted. With its rubber men in whose veins ran only official ink, it represented the Spain that had failed. Costa was a Republican; but it was nothing magic about the Republican formula which attracted him. It was the fact that Republicanism offered the best chance, he thought, to substitute a new personnel in the government, one inspired by true devotion to the public weal. But what the Monarchy lacked, the Republic must have in order to be more than another political clique—a real leader, a son of the masses.

In summary, Costa's relation to liberalism can best be expressed in his program for Republican activity: "Renovation of abstract and legalistic liberalism in vogue, a liberalism which has sought only to gain and preserve legal freedom through the illusory means of the *Official Gazette*, and the substitution of a neo-liberalism which will be more deeply rooted, which will create and guarantee the people's freedom through personal action on the part of those who govern. This action will be directed with an iron hand toward the suppression of oligarchy and political bosses; it will make of a state which is worse than feudal a nation of eighteen million citizens who will be free in fact"²⁴

Students of modern Spanish social history can easily see the influence that such liberal ideas as these of Costa have had. He pointed out unmistakably the direction which later liberal activity has taken in Spain. In some cases his program has been literally carried out; for example, the changes made in the universities, the reform of primary instruction, and the de-

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-71.

velopment of irrigation. Others are still only liberal ideals. Well does a contemporary writer state the debt of Spanish liberals to Costa: "The fundamental ideas of Costa are central in the common program of our revolutionary nuclei."²⁵

The somewhat fragmentary study of Ganivet, Unamuno, and Costa here presented may give a general idea of the trends of thought current among the antitraditionalist intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the three thinkers discussed is their lack of agreement on any basic program or even any point of view. This is true of most of the writers of the so-called Generation of 1898. As they conceived it, their duty was to challenge and criticize. Salvador de Madariaga summarizes their work: "The message of this generation springs from a critical mood prepared by a long century of trial and error (with a stress of error) and determined by the defeat of 1898. What are we? What have we done? What are the Spanish values which circulate in the world? . . . Why all this disorder at home? Why this sham and pretense? A Constitution flouted, a Parliament which is a comedy, general elections which are but markets for votes . . . corruption and incompetence."²⁶

Such were the questions confronting the generation of which Baroja was a product.

However important the "men of '98" and their critical ideology may be, their type of thought did not monopolize the field of modern Spanish letters. Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, for example, the most famed of late nineteenth-century literary critics, was a loyal traditionalist, opposed to the whole viewpoint of men like Joaquín Costa. His faith in Catholicism and the Monarchy was complete and unwavering: "I am a Catholic, not a neo-Catholic nor an old Catholic, but simply

²⁵ Antonio Espina, in a review of Ciges Aparicio's *Joaquín Costa*, in *Revista de Occidente*, XXX (1930), 139.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 139-40.

a firm and convinced Catholic, as were my father and his father before him, as Spain has always been in history, the Spain which engendered so many more saints, and heroes than modern Spain."²⁷

He recognized the maladies of Spain in his time, but attributed them to causes radically different from those stressed by Costa: "Two centuries of systematic and incessant labor to bring about the revolution artificially in Spain, where it can never be an organic force, have succeeded only in weakening and perverting the national character, not in renewing it."²⁸

The last volume of his monumental *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, a careful and detailed work, is devoted to tracing the chain of events which initiated and accompanied this perversion of national values. The results of the *Cortes* of Cádiz, so revered by many modern Spanish Liberals, are for him the culmination of the heretical French influence in eighteenth-century Spain. Disregarding the historical tradition of their country, the framers of the Constitution composed a useless and silly document, in which the blind fury against the Church found its theoretical formulation and origin.

The liberalism which was developed later in the century, "falsified freedom, godless politics or political naturalism," he classifies in two principal trends. The earlier *progresismo*, "that coffee-shop liberalism which meddled in human and divine matters with the most abysmal ignorance" and which predominated until 1856, was based in theory (although it was far from a coherent doctrine) on the French encyclopedism of the eighteenth century. While these *progresistas* often superficially professed to maintain the unity of religion in Spain, they actually instigated the murder and maltreatment of priests, sold Church property, converted convents

²⁷ *La ciencia española* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1933), I, 191.

²⁸ *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, VII, 514.

into barracks, all with "a certain natural propensity for destruction." They used all the worst tricks of the old absolutism. Mendizábal, the Liberal leader in 1836, is the special target of Menéndez y Pelayo's invective. The confiscation of the property of the clergy by Mendizábal was nothing but a wholesale robbery which flattered the basest instincts and cupidity of the masses. "Revolutions always are directed toward the lowest element of human nature." The horrible murders of Jesuits and the burning of convents during the Liberal triumph of 1836 are laid directly at the door of the Liberals.

The later democratic tendencies of liberalism after 1856 are distinguished from the preceding swashbuckling tactics by an academic tinge. Menéndez y Pelayo calls it "the pedantic democratic heterodoxy of the universities." Really "fantastic nonsense," "it affected dogmatic and scientific pretensions, which were the direct result of the shameful indigestion of intellectual food which is called modern Spanish culture."²⁹

Among the representatives of this academic liberalism, he places the dominant figures of early Republicanism, Sanz del Río, Castelar, and Salmerón; he is particularly sharp in his condemnation of them; they represent "something horrible and repugnant to every independent soul which abhors deceitful trickery." Sanz del Río was a confused and crafty pedant; Castelar a wordy, baroque orator, with a marked tendency toward inaccuracies. Concerning one of their important goals, the secularization of the universities, he says: "The university as a free institution, Catholic and Spanish, is my formula." He feared that the secularization of the schools in Spain would bring about godless education, which, however it might simulate apparent neutrality, "is an unworthy mutilation of the human mind in its highest and most ideal aspect."

According to Menéndez y Pelayo, the greatness of Spain, her unity despite natural obstacles, and her evangelizing mission

²⁹ *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, p. 219.

in the world were due entirely to Christianity and the Church. Until Spain returns to that ancient tradition of Christian unity, her future will be chaotic.

The current of thought represented by Menéndez y Pelayo is a factor which must be considered as a background for the study of Ricardo León.

CHAPTER THREE

BAROJA AND THE THEORY OF LIBERALISM

IN THE FACT that Pío Baroja (1872-), the most vitriolic critic of the Spanish aristocracy, was born in San Sebastián, the luxurious playground of the aristocrats, lies a certain irony. San Sebastián is in the heart of the Basque country, and many critics have seen in Baroja's Basque ancestry an explanation of his vigorous and blunt disposition.

As a young man, Baroja trained to be a physician and actually practiced his profession for two years in a remote Basque village. Although he shortly abandoned this career for the more congenial labors of journalism, his medical experience stood him in good stead in his later literary endeavors, since it brought him an understanding of the pathological human types so numerous in his novels. After a successful apprenticeship as a journalist, Baroja published his first novel in 1900. Since that time he has been a prolific and untiring creator, in the fields of both the essay and the novel. His fictional works may be roughly divided into two types: a series of historical novels, the *Memorias de un hombre de acción*, which are concerned with the martial events of the nineteenth century in Spain; and a number of trilogies which cover all types of Spanish life and characters but which commonly revolve about the conflicting social and intellectual problems of his country. To date Baroja has written over fifty novels and a dozen volumes of essays. His novels have been widely translated into a number of languages, and several are available in English.

There are many difficulties involved in the investigation of the social ideas of Pío Baroja; principal among them is one inherent in any attempt to trace the opinions of a writer who

is primarily a novelist—the task of determining to what extent the author expresses himself through his characters. Some of the material utilized in the following pages is drawn from essays and articles by Baroja, which presumably express the writer's ideas directly. But an author as subtle as Baroja does not compose his novels as mere textbooks of propaganda. He is intensely interested in the human scene as a whole, and his pages include characters and opinions of every sort. In his novels are scores of strange individuals who flicker momentarily on the scene, sketched only in coarse outline, and then slip rapidly away. Others are more fully portrayed and seem to express in their spiritual struggles and meditations the author's own efforts to see a confused world clearly. Generally speaking, these are the characters which one must follow in order to arrange a compendium of Baroja's social thought. When their experiences and reactions are checked against those which Baroja has elsewhere avowed as his own, we see that certain of his protagonists are more or less faithful mouthpieces of their creator; especially is this true of Andrés Hurtado (*El árbol de la ciencia*), Luis Murgía (*La sensualidad perversa*), Fermín (*Los visionarios*), Larrañaga (*Las agonías de nuestro tiempo*: trilogy), and, to a lesser extent, César (*César o nada*).

A second obstacle in the path of presenting an integrated outline of Baroja's social ideology is that of the real and apparent inconsistencies which often occur in his opinions. There are numerous examples in this study. Some of them are probably due to the sacrifice of consistency in viewpoint to artistic needs; it is difficult to say when some of Baroja's characters are speaking for him and when they are led to contradict him for artistic effect. But more important perhaps is the possibility that Baroja, like most sincere observers of our individual and social idiosyncrasies, has certain ideological contradictions in his own mind which betray themselves in his writings. In

this sense he is especially typical of his generation; torn with conflicting ideals, affected by multitudinous winds of doctrine, his thought lacks the consistency of the convinced reformer and the doctrinaire traditionalist.

In this discussion of Baroja there will be frequent occasion to remark on the affinity between him and one of his favorite authors, Friedrich Nietzsche. It is probable that many of the contradictions in Baroja result from a desire to imitate the critical method of the German philosopher. This method often implies that all things commonly accepted need opposition and contradiction; the idea of formulating a consistent ideology from such opposition is foreign to Nietzsche's spirit. Baroja says: "Especially is Nietzsche original when he denies and opposes the commonplace in an angry and deliberate fashion. For example, the majority of men eulogize truth as one of the bases of life. Not Nietzsche; he eulogizes falsehood When Nietzsche is reasonable he loses his identity. It is plain that in literature and philosophy one can defend both sides of a question in a very plausible manner."¹ While Baroja here qualifies his respect for Nietzsche, it seems evident that his inveterate habit of opposing the commonplace, regardless of consistency, is borrowed to some extent from his German predecessor.

In the categorical analysis to which Baroja's works lend themselves the reconciling of inconsistencies may find little place; in its stead may appear a reasonably comprehensive account of his social thought, contradictions included, as it is expressed in his essays and novels. Moreover, the historical series, *Memorias de un hombre de acción*, and his novels of the sea will not be considered here, except in one or two cases,

¹ *Vitrina pintoresca*, p. 123. [The Appendix to this study contains a list of the works of Pío Baroja and Ricardo León which have been found pertinent, and to that list the reader is referred for full bibliographical data.]

since they mainly represent his efforts in the adventure story and give little of the reflective conversation characteristic of his other works.

DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Historically, one of the essential factors of liberalism has been its critical and destructive aspect. Conceived at a time when its proponents believed that the chief obstacles to a freer life were traditional and established ways of thought, it was natural that their activity should be characterized by an emphasis on a destruction of the old rather than on specific blue-prints of the new. The eighteenth-century liberals, Voltaire and Diderot, for example, were more active in their sarcastic criticism of Church, State, and conventional society than in any constructive planning. The economic philosophy of *laissez faire*, current among early nineteenth-century Liberals, was directed against the mercantilist repression of trade and against government monopoly in industry; the Liberal struggle for representative government was another expression of critical reaction against absolutism and repression. In both cases the emphasis was on negative liberty, on freedom from certain hampering restrictions. Modern conceptions of liberalism tend to shift the emphasis from negative criticism to a more positive and concrete method of providing opportunity for the development of the free life. Nevertheless, a modern Liberal says: "The negation of custom and social mechanism, however lawless and arbitrary, marks the first liberation of the mind from that which burdened and paralyzed it. . . . And even in its highest stages of spiritual progress, when freedom is a sure possession that has already borne fruit, the work of negation and criticism must still be renewed if the mind is not to lose itself in a passive stagnation."²

To an exceptional degree the spokesmen for much Spanish

² Ruggiero, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

liberal thought represent this destructive and critical aspect of liberalism. In this respect they link themselves with a trend of critical satire which has been constant in Spanish literature and especially evident in the works of such masters as Gracián, Quevedo, and Larra. Unamuno and Ganivet, in common with most of the writers aroused by the disaster of 1898, were vociferous and often bitter in their criticism of existing conditions, but only exceptionally did they advance any positive suggestion for a working plan of change.

Pío Baroja, although he disclaims connection with the so-called Generation of 1898, is no exception to the predominantly destructive spirit current among the end-of-the-century critics. Almost unanimously his commentators have agreed that one of the unchanging factors of his work, if not the main factor, is his rebellious custom of tearing down. One says:

"He clings to an academic spirit of negation, a systematic reaction in the midst of a medley of ideas which, if they were clarified, would doubtless have less interest for him."³

Another states: "Baroja considers himself a liberal and an anarchist, but only in so far as liberalism and anarchism stand for the destruction of the past, the liberation of the individual from the series of oppressive bonds which society, through its two basic institutions, the Church and the State, has laid upon him."⁴

The critical tendency in Baroja is no mere outburst of temper incidental to bad humor. His attacks are systematically and consciously employed as part of his social philosophy, and he states his aim clearly many times: "The mission of the intellectual bourgeoisie is simply stated: one must destroy unceasingly and with tenacity. It will be the workers' task to

³ Corpus Barga, "Lo que falta y lo que sobra en las dos últimas novelas de Pío Baroja," *Revista de Occidente*, XV (1927), 416.

⁴ César Barja, *Libros y autores contemporáneos* (New York: G. F. Stechert, 1935), p. 311.

build anew." He is aware that many readers resent his attitude and declare that he should abandon his negative attitude and turn to the preservation and creation of values. But his answer is unequivocal: "Preserve what? Privilege? Barbarism? The prestige of a handful of numskulls? No. That is ridiculous. We must preserve nothing. We must destroy. Our society is still barbarous, and it must be made more perfect, the sooner the better. Everyone realizes that it is barbarous; a society that has need of priests, soldiers, hangmen, titles of nobility, prisons, and gallows is an absurd society, still in a primitive and embryonic stage."⁵

A partial explanation of this attitude is, as he himself admits, that he has felt himself to be a failure, a misfit in his environment. Apparently his sensitivity has been wounded by the seeming unreasonableness of current conventionalities and institutions: ". . . every strong, intelligent man who has vital sap in his brain fibers must of necessity be a rebel in the face of the stupidity of law and custom."⁶

He claims that there is an express purpose back of his desire to destroy. When a journalist accuses him of having no other object than that of destruction, he answers, "I criticize and attack that which seems to me bad in order to make room for that which seems to me good."⁷ The process of destructive criticism is to submit all the old ideas to the acid test of the scientific method. Nothing should be accepted on faith, without investigation. And, although it would be difficult to call Baroja an optimist, at times he seems to have a faith that from the disintegrating process will rise a new and more desirable system of ideas and activities: "Thanks to destructive ideas, man lives better today than yesterday." "As a result of the pessimism of the last thirty years an attempt has been made to

⁵ *Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, pp. 26-27.

⁶ *La dama errante*, pp. 55-56.

⁷ *Las horas solitarias*, pp. 401-2.

correct a number of the errors and vices of our social life, and the efforts have been at least partially successful.”⁸

Baroja believes, as did Nietzsche, that destruction is the necessary concomitant of creation. In his fantastic novel *Paradox, rey*, he gives a poetic “*Elogio de la destrucción*,” which illustrates this relationship: “To destroy is to change; that is all. In destruction lies the necessity of creating. In destruction is involved the germinal idea of that which is desired. Pale images of human thought, brutal manifestations of inert matter: you are equally destructive and equally creative. To destroy is to change. No, that is not all: to destroy is to create.”⁹

Such words echo Nietzsche: “And he who hath to be a creator in good and evil—verily he hath first to be a destroyer, and break values in pieces. . . . And let everything break up which can break up by our truths: Many a house is still to be built!”¹⁰

SCIENCE

It is difficult to define the outlines of the new order which Baroja hopes will result from this destruction. But among the few affirmations which he makes are several passages professing a faith in science as a basis for life: “In my opinion the best thing would be to organize life in a natural and scientific fashion. In other words, take advantage of its possibilities.”¹¹ In a lecture given in 1910 to a group of radicals in Barcelona, he exalts science with a lyric eloquence unusual for him: “Science alone is light. Science is the enduring benevolent handiwork of humanity; as it advances little by little it gives us bread for our bodies and for our spirits, and drives away

⁸ *Entreteneimientos*, p. 161.

⁹ *Paradox, rey*, pp. 195–96.

¹⁰ *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), p. 127.

¹¹ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 402.

from us sickness and death. Science is sacred, our protecting mother."¹²

Venancio, a character in *La dama errante* and one of the rare likable and positive characters created by Baroja, is a scientist who believed that "science was like a great tower, reaching up into the unknown, which must be enlarged and completed."¹³ Baroja contrasts his calm and reasoned convictions with the wordy vacuity of Dr. Aracil, a more important character.

Science appeals to Baroja because it is above the furor of controversy and the uncertainty of social theories. In religion, morals, and sociology all may be fantasy: "The only sure truth is that of science, and to that truth we must come with a faith that is the result of opened eyes."¹⁴ ". . . science can have neither friends nor enemies. . . . There are no heretics in the realm of science."¹⁵

In contrast to history, which separates men, science is international and joins them together. Perhaps this respect for the scientific method is partially due to the influence of Baroja's early medical training.

In the citations given above, the word "science" is obviously used in a very general sense, and we are not sure precisely what connotations he gives to the word. Apparently he means the scientific method as evolved by modern experimental science and generalized to form a sort of a way of life, a manner of approaching social as well as natural phenomena. However, Baroja does not specifically define the word.

His main interest always centers in the Spanish scene, and he applies his respect for science to it: "Science is the most important thing for a country which wishes to amount to something

¹² *Divagaciones apasionadas*, pp. 153-55.

¹³ *La dama errante*, p. 42.

¹⁴ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, pp. 158-59.

¹⁵ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 220.

in the world."¹⁶ He deplores the indifference of the Spaniards to scientific progress and declares that stimulation of invention and the institution of laboratories are among Spain's most urgent needs.

But Baroja is not always consistent in an unreserved faith in the role of science in the future of the human race. He realizes that the naïve reliance on the boundless virtue of the scientific method alone is too simplified an approach to the solution of human problems. There is apparently a conflict in his mind between the claims of the intellectual way of science and truth and the vital way of illusion and opportunism, which is most graphically set forth in *El árbol de la ciencia*. This novel is almost a spiritual autobiography, as Baroja himself points out.

The protagonist, Andrés Hurtado, is a type of character common in the novels of Baroja: a confused and puzzled intellectual, appalled by the gray stupidity of his environment and sincerely seeking some orientation, some guiding truth, to satisfy practical and spiritual needs. Deeply influenced by his reading of Kant and Schopenhauer, he formulates tentatively a "philosophical plan." From the German philosophers he arrives at the fundamental premise that there is no time, space, nor world independent of our own senses. The so-called mathematical propositions are only factors in the nature of human consciousness. But, given the probability of the falsity of the relationship between our concept of reality and reality itself, the error is a constant in all our perceptions and consequently the relationship between our various sensory observations has an absolute truth. This gives us a basis for science. Hurtado says: "Science evaluates observed data; it relates the various particular sciences, which are like explored islands in the ocean of the unknown; it raises bridges between

¹⁶ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 118.

the islands so that there is a certain unity in their relationship."¹⁷

As a young man, Hurtado is inclined to worship and enshrine science as a bulwark against the shifting sands of religion and the evanescent vagaries of philosophy. But his uncle, Dr. Iturriz, to whom he expounds the preceding ideas and whose philosophy is utilitarian and somewhat epicurean, objects that science in overcoming its obstacles has overcome man himself also: "In these days science is not an institution with human ends in view; it is something more; you have changed it into an idol. Fundamentally I am convinced that truth, by and large, is bad for life. This anomaly of nature which is called life needs to be based on caprice, possibly on falsehood."¹⁸

The Tree of Knowledge (*Ciencia*), Dr. Iturriz continues, is antagonistic to the Tree of Life. Life in order to persist must take what is useful and convenient to it whether it is scientifically true or not: "But this agnosticism for all things which cannot be known scientifically is absurd because it is antivital. One must live. You know that physiologists have shown that we tend to perceive through our senses, not in the most exact way, but in the most economical, advantageous, and useful way. What better norm for life than its utility, its increase?"¹⁹

Science as yet can give us no useful knowledge about the most important questions of life, and in them we must exercise the strength of faith and illusion. "I believe that we must live in accordance with the silly whims that we have within us, cherishing them and profiting by them."²⁰

¹⁷ *El árbol de la ciencia*, p. 179.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197; cf. Joseph Krutch, *The Modern Temper* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929), pp. 21-22.

Hurtado believes in the possibility of building a better world on the basis of scientific analysis. But Iturriz claims that the great evil of society is egoism, and that it is an essential and natural factor of life. Society is moved to change never by the methods of scientific or analytical valuation but by illusory promises of paradise: "It is as if you should say to a woman: 'Let's get married and maybe we can get along together.' No, one must promise a paradise to a woman and also to society; this shows the insufficiency of your analytical ideal."²¹

Which of these two points of view accurately reflects Baroja's own convictions is not obvious. It is probable that the controversy between the two men represents a similar conflict which Baroja has experienced. At any rate this struggle of values again mirrors and was perhaps suggested by a similar conflict in the case of Nietzsche. In *Human, All Too Human* there is an optimistic faith in science: "The aim of modern science is: as little pain as possible, as long a life as possible—a kind of eternal blessedness, therefore."²² This was said in a period of Nietzsche's life when he was exalting intellectualism and the scientific method. But later he faced the conflict of science (which he identified with Christian asceticism) with the instincts and the natural life.²³ The experiences of Hurtado in *El árbol de la ciencia* as a doctor in a small village of La Mancha are certainly discouraging for any ideal of the scientific betterment of mankind; his resultant scepticism and the objections of Iturriz to science are echoed elsewhere in Baroja's works. In his rambling essays on humor, he says: "Man clings too closely to his ego to become enthused about a cold thing like science. Science has the appearance of a consciousness superior to humanity, which is cognizant of its destiny. Nevertheless, when we come closer to it, we realize

²¹ *El árbol de la ciencia*, pp. 195-96.

²² Paragraph 128.

²³ *Genealogy of Morals*, Vol. III, paragraph 25.

that science is as ignorant as other human institutions of ultimate ends."²⁴

Yet the author insists that he admires the man of science because, realizing the ultimate limitations of his method, he forges resolutely ahead. He is "the hero of the modern tragedy."

Baroja's limit of scepticism toward the possibilities of science is found in one of his recent novels concerning postwar Europe, *Las veleidades de la fortuna*. Larrañaga, a character similar in some respects to Hurtado, had placed his faith before the war in techniques, believing that democracy was a failure. But now he sees that even the promise of techniques turns out to be an illusion, especially as applied to the realm of politics: "Like the majority of people of my generation who are not dogmatic, I begin to wonder if a religious or metaphysical theory is not worth just as much as a scientific discovery, because, if a religious theory ages and is forgotten, exactly the same thing happens to the scientific discovery."²⁵

In spite of his vacillations of confidence in the value and application of the scientific method, Baroja's net attitude is one of respect and faith, especially when the method of science and that of religion conflict: "This is the characteristic thing about the Basque novelist: to oppose religion and science, and to value science far above any religion or attitude of religious mysticism."²⁶

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

I have entered into considerable detail concerning Baroja's ideas about science because the belief in the power of science was part and parcel of the development of the Liberal ideal in the nineteenth century, and was in many ways basic to it.

²⁴ *La caverna del humorismo*, pp. 317-18.

²⁵ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 203.

²⁶ César Barja, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

The tremendous growth of scientific discovery and its application strengthened and affirmed, according to the Liberals, that important assumption of liberalism, the idea of indefinite perfectibility, which had been evolved by the eighteenth-century French *philosophes*. They believed that scientific and mechanical progress, apparently limitless, opened wide the door to a future in which man could progressively conquer his environment. The forces of science would clear the way for a triumphant march to a social paradise.

It may be stated categorically that Baroja has no faith at all in any idealistic, teleological view of progress. The development of the conception of progress is closely related to the early German idealist philosophers—Lessing, Herder, Kant, and Hegel. Lessing's view, for example, was that "the world is a unity and its history the record of a progressive revelation in necessary sequences; that there is a law in human history. . . . This revelation will inevitably bring man to the fullness of perfection."²⁷ Hegel considered the course of history to be an orderly unfolding of the human spirit toward freedom and implied that there was an internal purpose in the process.

Baroja says that he distinguishes two main viewpoints which men occupy toward the world. One is the teleological interpretation, which may lead either to a completely religious conception of life or to a conviction that the end of man is to realize human progress; in practice such an attitude results either in theocracy and absolutism, on the one hand, or in socialism and anarchism. The other viewpoint is agnostic; it holds that man has no known reason for being in the world, and pragmatic opportunism is its logical consequence in practical politics. Baroja declares that although teleology is biologically natural, it is a human delusion. He is on the side of the agnostics.²⁸

²⁷ A. J. Todd, *Theories of Social Progress* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), II, 232.

²⁸ *Las horas solitarias*, pp. 31-33.

He despises such hopeful moralists as Bossuet and Emerson, who see order and compensation in the world: "Doubtless I do not have access to the antenna which can catch the moral waves from the attic of the universe. I find in it only disorder, forces which crash in confusion, chance, fate, and even a slightly diabolical odor."²⁹

The faith of Hegel and Comte in a sort of cosmic optimism is to him only a nineteenth-century dogma which remains unproven. All that we know is that we consume energy and move, without any assurance that that movement represents progress.

Against this background of general scepticism toward the idea of inevitable progress, Baroja frequently distinguishes between moral progress and scientific progress: "I am no great believer in the moral progress of mankind. Material and scientific progress can easily be seen and felt, but not moral progress."³⁰ Although the character of Silvestre Paradox is a semihumorous creation, some of his opinions perhaps reflect Baroja's own on this point: "Silvestre recognized progress in civilization and he waxed enthusiastic over its material advances; but he did not feel the same way about moral evolution. In the future he saw the rule of the strong, and the hierarchy of strength, like all hierarchies, seemed to him to be an injustice in nature."³¹

The worst part is that science, the only factor that is really progressing, is steadily drawing away from the masses of people because of its abstruse nature; the result is a clique of modern wise men faced by an uncomprehending mob.

Like that of many other sincere thinkers of his time, Baroja's

²⁹ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, pp. 8-9.

³⁰ *El gran torbellino del mundo*, p. 61.

³¹ *Aventuras, inventos y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox*, p. 103.

pessimism in regard to progress in the modern world was intensified by the World War. With all his technical advance, man's moral nature seems no better. The war indicated not only that man is still as fierce as the Cro-Magnon man but also that he is as dogmatic and fanatical as the zealots of the Middle Ages. Larrañaga, the typical disillusioned postwar protagonist of *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, a novel filled with unrelieved despair concerning the future of Europe, says: "Civilization advances, but not in all of its aspects. What is gained in one direction is lost in another. When you draw up the balance of an epoch, it is not evident that we have become better on the whole; we have advanced in one direction and fallen back in another."³²

While Baroja grants that a certain progress in a material way has been achieved, in common with Unamuno and Gantivet he finds such progress unsatisfying. The character of Samuel Bothwell in one of Baroja's earliest novels, *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, in many ways typifies the author's general attitude and that of the whole Generation of 1898. Bothwell says: "Material progress has done nothing but weaken us; it has caused the substitution of energy drawn from matter for individual initiative. Tomorrow, man will not need to add, because the machine will add; he will not need to write, for a machine will write; he will not need to chew nor digest his food, because a machine will do it for him. The machine will think and speak and will make pictures with this indecent modern invention called the daguerreotype. Some day humanity will disappear and its place will be taken by machinery functioning by means of a mechanical system similar to that of those cursed socialists in Paris."³³ A quarter of a century later Baroja returns to the same theme: ". . . the more

³² *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 203.

³³ *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, p. 188.

material progress there is the more ugly and unlovely will it be."³⁴

In such pronouncements about modern mechanical progress, he identifies himself with a current prevalent in modern thought, liberal and otherwise. It has been particularly common in the United States since economic depression has suggested to some that we are the slaves, not the masters, of the machine. Lewis Mumford summarizes the typical tenor of the quarrel with technical progress: ". . . the mere bulk of technology, its mere power and ubiquitousness, give no proof whatever of its relative human value, of its place in the economy of an intelligent human society. The very fact that one encounters resistances, reversions, archaisms at the moment of the greatest technical achievement . . . makes one doubt both the effectiveness and the sufficiency of the whole scheme of life the machine has so far brought into existence."³⁵

In Spain these ideas have been most fully expressed by Ganivet, Unamuno, and León.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH LIBERALISM

Baroja's ideas on destructive criticism, science, and the doctrine of progress give us some conception of his attitude toward several of the theoretical cornerstones of the liberal way of thinking. His opinion of the Liberal parties, which played such a prominent part in the political destinies of Spain during the last century, is more specific.

His father and his great-grandfather, he says, were both Liberals, the former a volunteer in the Liberal forces and the latter editor of a Liberal paper in Guipúzcoa. He praises his

³⁴ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 203.

³⁵ Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934), p. 317.

great-grandfather as a man with more initiative and spirit than other relatives.

The hero of Baroja's long series, *Memorias de un hombre de acción*, Eugenio Aviraneta, who was a distant relative of the author, fought nobly for the Liberal cause during the first part of the nineteenth century: "Aviraneta was a man of great personal integrity who sought for results without bothering overmuch about the means. . . . he attempted to be a realistic politician in a country which recognizes only the rhetorical orator. . . . He was a brave man, a daring patriot, and an enthusiastic Liberal."³⁶

But, sincere Liberal as Aviraneta was, it is through him that Baroja expresses some of his severest criticism of the Spanish Liberal parties. He prophesies what will happen to the Liberals: ". . . they will all start to defend the external forms of liberalism, the incidental, secondary part—parliament, democracy, mechanical progress—to flatter the middle classes. No one will defend that which is the essential part of liberalism, the spirit of humanism."³⁷ In other parts of the *Memorias*, he accuses the Liberals of credulous stupidity, superficiality, enlightened despotism, and, above all, idolatry of bombastic oratory.³⁸

This same censure of vacuous oratory he applies to some of the leaders of the Liberal movements. The Conservative leaders were ridiculous, completely lacking in intellectual agility; but the fathers of the first Republic, such as Salmerón and Castelar, were almost as bad. Marvelous actors and orators, they had no depth to their thought. Of Joaquín Costa he says: "I do not believe that Costa was a modern European spirit. He was a man capable of playing a role in the *Cortes* of Cádiz: solemn, pompous, rhetorical, he was one of these

³⁶ *El aprendiz de conspirador*, pp. 11-12.

³⁷ *Las máscaras sangrientas*, p. 201.

³⁸ *Con la pluma y con el sable*, p. 423.

actors typical of southern countries who die without suspecting that their whole life has been a stage performance."³⁹

While he excepts Pi y Margall, who was a sincere man and a lover of ideas, he condemns the whole *Krausista* movement as "the most commonplace and least original of German philosophies." The active Liberals and *Progresistas* of the latter part of the century he considers true to their principles in public only; secretly they compromised with reaction; they were interested only in democratic platitudes, in modern progress as a brilliant catchword. Miserable and ignorant, they formed petty cliques without true social vision.⁴⁰

Baroja is scornful not only of the personal characteristics of the Liberals but also of their characteristic doctrines: "The second type of liberalism involves all those false and ridiculous liberties which are put forward in political programs: freedom of association, universal suffrage, liberty of the press, inviolability of the home. All this is stupid and has absolutely no utility. . . . And are these the liberties which we are going to defend? No, let the devil take them. We all have liberty in our souls; it reigns there. External liberty we shall never obtain."⁴¹

The principles motivating the French Revolution, which were habitually on the lips of the nineteenth-century Liberals, he considers mystical nonsense: ". . . they tell me that I am free thanks to the French Revolution. May I be excused from believing in such pious jargon."⁴² Parliamentary government particularly seems to him a hindrance to the development of real politics: "I am also opposed to representative government. I do not believe in the sublimity of this system, which pre-

³⁹ *Juventud, egolatría*, pp. 293-95.

⁴⁰ *Entretenimientos*, pp. 133-51; see also *Las horas solitarias*, p. 237.

⁴¹ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 70.

⁴² *Las horas solitarias*, p. 84.

tends that the majority is always right."⁴³ This point will be discussed more at length in the examination of Baroja's judgment of democracy.

He has, of course, no more regard for the traditionalist parties in Spain. "Spanish traditionalism is despicable and limited in vision."⁴⁴ ". . . it bore the seal of clericalism and demagogery."⁴⁵

In the final analysis, it appears that Baroja has little faith in the historical political parties, Liberal or Conservative. Their political morality is fundamentally the same: "The greed of both parties is of the same sort. The only difference is that the Conservatives take a great deal of money on one single occasion, while the Liberals take a little on repeated occasions."⁴⁶

Real individual liberty is almost impossible to secure: "Liberal governments failed to secure it in actuality; the absolutists, of course, did not achieve it, since it wasn't in their program."⁴⁷ Suspicion and distrust of practical politics is everywhere evident in Baroja's novels. Hurtado, in *El árbol de la ciencia*, even as a student fears that politics, particularly in Spain, is "a scoundrel's art," and his mistrust is amply confirmed during his sojourn in the Manchegan village of Alcolea, where both the Liberal and the Conservative *caciques* were mere bandits. The Liberal political boss was a huge, barbarous ruffian who robbed the populace without even dissimulating his thievery, as did the Conservative boss. And apparently the people of Alcolea had become so accustomed to the division of spoils between the two parties that they were indifferent, even considering them necessary elements of their society.

⁴³ *Paradox, rey*, pp. 215-16.

⁴⁴ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 238.

⁴⁵ *Las máscaras sangrientas*, p. 210.

⁴⁶ *Juventud, egolatría*, p. 310. ⁴⁷ *Siluetas románticas*, pp. 101-2.

The experience of César in *César o nada*, as he struggles with the political cliques of another small Spanish town, is even more pessimistic. "It is clear that politics always has been the same, a low and dirty affair suitable for clowns and climbers, adorned with a literature of the lowest type. And I fear that it will continue to be the same for centuries."⁴⁸

THE MEANING OF LIBERALISM FOR BAROJA

In spite of his violent rejection of liberalism as it has been embodied in Spanish political thought, Baroja nevertheless claims to be a true liberal in his fashion: "I have been and am a liberal and an undisciplined individualist."⁴⁹ He carefully separates what he considers the wheat from the chaff in his concept of liberalism. I have already stressed his preference for its destructive side. In so far as liberalism attacks the social system of the past in Spain and fights organized religious prejudices, Baroja favors it. As long as liberalism is the aggressive critic of the status quo, he stands with it; but as soon as it becomes established in power and attempts to realize its constructive aims, such as parliamentary democracy, Baroja parts company with it in disgust.

Aviraneta defines the positive content of Baroja's liberalism, although in somewhat vague terms; after referring to the practical liberalism of his time as comprised in the Constitutional Government, he says: ". . . but aside from that there is a more important kind of liberalism: the philosophy of reason, unhampered investigation. . . . My liberalism means liberty of thought and of movement, the struggle against a suffocating traditionalism and against the Church."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴⁹ *El nocturno del hermano Beltrán*, p. 244.

⁵⁰ *Las máscaras sangrientas*, p. 200.

Liberty is almost a keynote in the writings of Baroja. Primarily it is not a liberty of legal formulas, but a personal independence, a fierce, anarchistic desire to be free from constraint, to do as he pleases, untrammelled by any human institution: "The only blessing that man has is liberty; the more the better."⁵¹ Parts of one of Baroja's recent novels, *Los visionarios*, are particularly relevant at this point. The protagonist, Fermín, expresses Baroja's individualistic reaction toward the new, growing Communist movement in Spain. He professes to belong to the generation which held Schopenhauer, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, and Nietzsche as their spiritual fathers. Their analytical and critical ideal was in sharp contrast to the growing importance of the mass man, the tendency of collectivism. The sight of the assumption of power by the masses made them, as old individualists, cling more closely to their scale of values, which included the widest liberty of the individual and an aristocracy of culture.⁵²

He continues, in the words of his protagonist, Fermín, to declare that struggle, hatred, and violence are less distasteful than authority: "In our eyes, liberty and one's own conscience stand above everything else. Liberty interests us more than Lenin. We want no common salvation nor political tutelage."⁵³

Fermín shares these ideals with other heroes in Baroja's novels. Hurtado holds the ideal of liberty above all others: "The real man, above all, seeks his independence. You would have to be a poor devil with a dog's soul to find liberty distasteful. You say that it's not possible? That men cannot be independent as one star from another? The only reply to this is to admit that it is true, unfortunately."⁵⁴ And in *La*

⁵¹ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 28.

⁵² *Los visionarios*, pp. 145-46.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-47.

⁵⁴ *El árbol de la ciencia*, p. 274.

sensualidad pervertida Luis Murgía claims that every dream of personal happiness and well-being must of necessity arise from "spiritual autonomy."⁵⁵

Baroja confesses that Zalacaín, the protagonist of one of his adventure novels, was the ideal of his younger days: ". . . he has no other dogma than that of the consciousness of his own life and strength." The novelist laments that this ideal, embodied in Zalacaín, is fading a little in his old age: "Now I no longer consider him as a son of mine . . . but as something strange and foreign to me."⁵⁶

He sums up his ideal of personal independence in Nietzschean terms: "Modern man is worth more, from any point of view, than ancient man; but in order to arrive at his perfect state, he must return to the natural law, glorify egoism, make use of all his faculties to conquer in the struggle for existence. . . . We should never sacrifice our personality to anything or anyone, and if necessity forces the sacrifice upon us, let us do it with mental reservations, waiting for the day of reckoning."⁵⁷

Aside from this personal individualism, Baroja also has an ideal of tolerance toward others. While the motto of fanatics, he states, has been: truth with force, "we liberals cherish and always will cherish dissenters, whatever the dogma be, old or new, religious or democratic. . . . Laissez faire! This has always been the motto of true liberals."⁵⁸ Even if God were proved to exist, the devil, he says, should be given some power for tolerance's sake. It should be said, however, that Baroja's toleration for the beliefs of others is more evident in theory than in practice. Still he prides himself on his per-

⁵⁵ *La sensualidad pervertida*, p. 131.

⁵⁶ *El nocturno del hermano Beltrán*, pp. 239-40.

⁵⁷ *El tablado de Arlequín*, pp. 57-58.

⁵⁸ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 182.

sonal tolerance. He reiterates his willingness to hear new ideas, to change his own when necessary, and above all to let others think as they please: "Even though some of my friends may not believe it, I am never stubborn in my ideas; the possibility of changing them not only does not bother me but even attracts me. I have fled from the idea of being dogmatic, and I have come to believe that a theory in the majority of cases is to be esteemed more because of its results and its future than because of its potential approximation to truth."⁵⁹

So far it has been easy to explain the importance that individual liberty has in Baroja's liberalism. But to specify a more definite content, to reconcile that content with the freedom of the individual, and to describe the manner of realizing it are apparently tasks that are difficult and comparatively unimportant for the skeptical Basque. However, on a few occasions he has permitted himself to give bits of a schematic outline of a perfect liberal state which would follow his criterion. The common ideal, he says, of bourgeois critics and constructive workers "will be the free expansion of human life in the bosom of nature."⁶⁰ The only genuine politics must be experimental and antiromantic. The resources and needs of the various regions of a country should be studied scientifically; on this basis a plan should be evolved to be carried out by the regions, acting as more or less autonomous units. Land should be given to the peasants, the power of the rich bourgeois and the Church should be curtailed, and modern sanitation should be made obligatory: "A perfect democracy would be one which would equalize, except for natural inequalities, opportunities for gaining a livelihood, for education, and even for life itself, and which would still leave people's minds, their

⁵⁹ *Revista de Occidente*, VII (1925), 260.

⁶⁰ *Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, p. 27.

wills, and their accumulated stores of knowledge free so that some would stand out above others."⁶¹

But this process must be prefaced by the abolition of universal suffrage, parliamentary bodies, and juries, which to Baroja represent only the strength of a "flock of barbarians." There should be a government of the intelligent, those who are conscious of the needs and conditions of their country, over the nonintelligent: "In this way we would have an absolutism of the intelligent over the nonintelligent, of those spirits which have reached a high stage of development over those who are lazy or asleep."⁶²

In order to create a social solidarity among the members of a people and to form strong, resistant characters able to weather the struggle for existence it is necessary to have "hierarchy and discipline": "We must formulate a social scheme which will mold minds through education, make them more adequate for the organization and acquisition of knowledge, make them capable of sustained work, build character, giving them strength, stamina, and a strong discipline so that they may be of use in the struggle for existence."⁶³

The theme of the struggle for existence, often woven into Baroja's work, assumes especial importance in the ideas of Roberto Hastings, the Englishman in *Aurora roja*. An activist, a believer in the dynamic life, he has faith not in the humanitarian illusions of fraternity but only in the ability of the strong and wise to impose themselves on the stupid masses. For him the only solution for the half-African Mediterranean peoples is a strong dictatorial government, a progressive despotism: "If a leader could possibly appear, a dictatorship would be most useful. Imagine a dictator who would say, 'I'm

⁶¹ *César o nada*, p. 9.

⁶² *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 67.

⁶³ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 116.

going to do away with bullfighting,' and would actually do away with it; 'I am going to suppress half of the clergy,' and would suppress them. One who would impose an income tax and build highways and railroads, imprison the political bosses who cause trouble, exploit the mines, and oblige people to plant trees."⁶⁴

He foresees a future society of decentralized clans, whose labor and interests are co-ordinated by the transmission of electric power; there is no longer any necessity for the crowded tenement districts and slums of modern cities. Power for factories can be transported long distances and factory life and rural life can be combined. Such a plan, under a "progressive despotism," would be a great boon to Spain. That Roberto's ideas parallel those of the author is not certain, but is very probable.

This question of dictatorship, of course, is fundamental to any consideration of Baroja's liberalism. Although he is no admirer of Mussolini, Hitler, or Stalin, he says in one of his most recent articles: ". . . I could consider a dictatorial government as possible and even plausible. In my opinion a dictatorship is a means of converting the wishes of the majority in a country into realities."⁶⁵

It is very much to the point to note here his reaction to the present crisis in Spain. He claims, as do many other observers, that the issue is a choice between a conservative dictatorship and a radical dictatorship. There is no middle ground in the Spanish civil struggle. Neither one nor the other appeals to him as a just or final solution; but, forced to choose, he says: "In spite of everything, I believe that today a White dictatorship is preferable for Spain. A dictatorship of White Repub-

⁶⁴ *Aurora roja*, p. 132.

⁶⁵ "La insensatez y la cuquería," *Ahora*, March 31, 1935, p. 5; cf. *Vitrina pintoresca*, p. 241.

licans one supposes it will be. With more or less severity in it, but with some sense, too. A Red dictatorship is the same everywhere—a government which makes many mistakes, whose intentions are obscure and confused.”⁶⁶

How can Baroja reconcile a dictatorial ideal with his expressed love of liberty? He realizes this conflict when he says: “From a human point of view the perfect society would be one which would defend the interests of the country as a whole and yet, at the same time, make room for individual interests; one that would give the individual the advantages of work in common and the most absolute liberty; one which would multiply the individual’s chances for work and give him personal independence. This would be a good and a just system.”⁶⁷

The details of achieving an equilibrium of this sort, so eagerly sought by modern Liberals, are lacking, unfortunately, in the work of Pío Baroja.

In regard to the record of existing states in realizing a liberalism acceptable to Baroja, he has recently given a few of his rare words of praise to the Scandinavian countries. He stresses the fact that they have a limited armed force, a complete system of free education, and an admirable chain of free libraries; large privately owned estates are prohibited, and yet the repressive power of the states is reduced to a minimum and a person has complete freedom of action within reasonable limits.⁶⁸ Perhaps these achievements are at least an approximation of Baroja’s ideal.

⁶⁶ “The Mistakes of the Spanish Republic,” *Living Age*, CCCLI (1937), 426–27.

⁶⁷ *César o nada*, p. 8.

⁶⁸ “La sabiduría comunista,” *Ahora*, February 24, 1935, p. 5.

CHAPTER FOUR

BAROJA AND POLITICAL PROGRAMS

GRANTED that Pío Baroja has some sort of theoretical picture of the good state in his mind, however vague and confused the picture may be, what does he think of the several political philosophies which have been advanced in Spain, as elsewhere, to achieve a liberal ideal? Aside from the liberal parties, which we know Baroja rejects on the whole, what are his opinions of parliamentary democracy and the Spanish Republicans, socialism, communism, and anarchism?

DEMOCRACY AND THE REPUBLICANS

His disdain for democracy has been apparent or implicit in much of the material presented above appropos of progress and the Liberal party. It is one of Baroja's most savage and bitter points of attack. Although many of his objections to democratic systems are now platitudes in modern critical comment, they may bear exposition here to complete the description of his social and political thought pattern.

By democracy Baroja means, not a spirit of genuine helpful love for all humanity, but the political system which tends to give the reins of government to the masses, resulting in the "absolutism of numbers." The idea that the mass of the people can govern is senseless to him for several reasons: the mass is stupid and imbecile; the mass is brutal. Ossorio, in *Camino de perfección*, when he meets a group of small-town bullies on election day, curses with his whole soul the fools that gave the suffrage to "that ignoble, miserable mob."¹ Equality, which is often presupposed by political democracy, has no justification in nature. Unfortunately nature has created us strong

¹ *Camino de perfección*, p. 73.

and weak, talented and stupid.² All attempts to disregard this fact of nature lead to a crushing of genius and talent, and to a glorification of the witless and mediocre members of society. While theoretically trying to level and equalize, the practical result of democracy has been the exaltation of the wealthy bourgeoisie. Especially through the influence of the press, the industrialists have made themselves the real masters of the so-called democratic nations. Thus democracy paradoxically leads to a new tyranny of the petty bourgeois state. He suggests that even the President of the United States may eventually become a new sort of autocratic Pope.³ Under the self-styled democratic governments there is no real liberty. "This democracy, in moments of danger, is forced to defend itself by employing antidemocratic means. When the crucial moment comes, then it abandons its ideals."⁴ He refers to the Scopes trial in Tennessee as a brilliant example of liberty of speech in a free democracy. Even Kant, living under an autocrat, fared better. The only liberty Baroja sees in the American democracies (he has a long-standing antipathy toward the South American nations) is that of dying of hunger.⁵ In brief, the whole democratic parliamentary machine is a farce in practice, based on hypocrisy and chicanery, the sole aims of which are purely histrionic.

Although the growth of democratic institutions in the nineteenth century was accompanied by similar disparagement by many outstanding thinkers in Europe (e.g., Carlyle and Ruskin), Baroja in this case may again owe an ideological debt to Nietzsche. The grounds of his criticism are identical: "Democracy represents the disbelief in all great men and in all

² *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 46.

³ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, pp. 119-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-99.

⁵ *El nocturno del hermano Beltrán*, pp. 201-2; see also *Siluetas románticas*, p. 102.

élite societies. . . . I am opposed to parliamentary government and the power of the press, because they are the means whereby cattle become masters.”⁶

The relation between democracy and liberalism has always been one of the most important questions in the consideration of liberalism. Ruggiero has pointed out that in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, one of the prime documents in the crystallization of political liberalism, there are “two elements of diverse origin and inspiration, juxtaposed and to some extent confused”⁷—the liberal idea of natural rights, and the democratic concept of popular sovereignty. The latter frequently implies forms of social co-operation embodied in the strong state which may conflict with the first concept. Historically liberalism and democracy have conflicted, especially in Germany and Italy. According to Ruggiero, however, the antagonism of the two is now “everywhere out of date. The provinces of liberalism and democracy can no longer be separated; they occupy common ground.”⁸ There remains theoretically between the extremes of the two a definite difference of value judgment, between the unrestricted freedom of individual activity and the tyranny of the majority in the strong democratic state. But practically the extremes have dropped out of the picture, leaving in contemporary times liberal democracy opposed to communism and dictatorships.

The Spanish Republican party was the group that probably has attempted to represent most completely the parliamentary, democratic ideal which is anathema to Baroja. It follows logically that he has little but scorn for the Republicans. No epithet can for him be more derogatory than *retórico*, and he uses it freely when speaking of them. They have no ideals

⁶ *The Will to Power*, paragraphs 752–53.

⁷ Ruggiero, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

important enough to distinguish them from the old regime. He refers to one of their newspapers which, except for the rhetorical blasts against the clergy, differs in no way from a Conservative newspaper.⁹ ". . . they hate the aristocrats, because they themselves cannot be aristocrats; they pretend to be democratic and yet anything plebeian bothers them. . . . they play the role of moral censors, and yet some run gambling houses and others taverns. And then they all are very authoritarian. . . . their whole idea of emancipation consists in ceasing to believe in the Pope in order to believe in Salmerón or in some other similar phrasemonger."¹⁰

The only time Baroja ever entered actively into politics was with Alejandro Lerroux, the veteran Republican leader. Baroja ran for municipal councilman. He left the party soon after, however, largely because he disagreed with the leader's plan to make the Republican group one of aristocratic oratory, friendly to the army; Baroja was interested in a revolutionary party which would arouse discontent and protest vigorously against injustice.

While he says he holds no grudge against Lerroux personally, he appeals many times to the *argumentum ad hominem* in his attack on Republicanism: In the novel, *Camino de perfección*, one of the many odious characters is the protagonist's uncle, who lived in Valencia. He is a Republican, "a specialist in democratic commonplaces." In his own household he is despotic, belying in private his public protestations in favor of freedom. Don Paco, the president of the Republican Freemasons in *La feria de los discretos*, is portrayed as a ridiculous, despicable person. He is very fluent with grandiloquent revolutionary phraseology, studded with references to liberty as a sacred, untouchable fetish. At heart he is a coward; to help

⁹ *Mala hierba*, p. 122.

¹⁰ *Aurora roja*, pp. 145-46.

him organize a revolutionary uprising, he hires Pacheco, a fierce, self-seeking bandit, who also professes Republican ideas. Another Republican character in Baroja's novels is Santolea, a law student in *La sensualidad pervertida*. He formerly wrote for newspapers, setting himself up as a pontifical moralist; fundamentally he is only a blustering orator, "a big voice in the service of a mediocre intellect."

Fausto in *Los últimos románticos* was a typical romantic youth of the early nineteenth century, a lover of romantic novels, subject to fits of sentimental melancholy. In time this literary sentimentalism became political and Fausto joined the Republican enthusiasts of his university. Their conversation was characterized by a morbid exaltation. All the university Republicans were orators' apprentices, who did nothing but discuss and talk; when a lucrative position was offered them, they hastily dropped their Republicanism: "Not one of these young men was capable of anything really noble or dangerous. Their romanticism was purely literary and consisted of talking, speechmaking, discussion. These young Republicans were typical of that rhetorical Spanish liberalism which could make no revolutions except by flattering or buying the army."¹¹

Baroja again emphasizes the infamy of compromising with the army when he tells about an imaginary interlocutor, completely lacking in original ideas, who wants the Republic to be brought about by the rich bourgeoisie, with the help of the army, in an orderly, legal, respectable manner. Baroja tells him that revolutions are not made that way.

With the actual advent of the Spanish Republic in 1931, Baroja's dramatic sense was stirred, and in one of his last trilogies, *La selva oscura* (1932), he gives us vivid pictures of conditions and thought currents in Republican Spain. Certainly no one could accuse Baroja of defending the Monarchy, regardless of his opinions of the Republicans. His remarks

¹¹ *Los últimos románticos*, p. 43.

about the members of the House of Bourbon are as severe as those of his contemporary Blasco Ibáñez, and bear a much more subtle sting. Ferdinand VII, the first of the nineteenth-century Bourbons, "was a two-faced hypocrite with the mind of a priest." Although he had an intelligent sense of humor, he was cruel and cowardly. Baroja suggests that both María Cristina and Isabel II were notoriously immoral, and as for the latter "it is known that she was deceitful, cruel, superstitious, and very treacherous." However, in spite of the defects of the sovereigns mentioned, at least their reigns were exciting and interesting from a novelist's standpoint. On the other hand, "the Regency of María Cristina and the reign of Alfonso XIII represented the anemic decline of a country which had lost its vitality and which was to end in a false, rhetorical Republic."¹²

In *Los visionarios*, Fermín, speaking for Baroja, says that the Monarchy fell by reason of its own rottenness, like over-ripe fruit, but that the Republic, based on worn-out doctrines and rancid platitudes, had no desire nor fitness to change Spain radically: "We are living in a time of commonplaces. They are trying to serve up as fresh fruit this boring, fine-spun nonsense about parliamentarism and democracy, which is artificial as well as shopworn."¹³

In many ways, Baroja admits, the Republic was born under auspicious circumstances. Its establishment was not attended by widespread civil strife, since public opinion seemed almost unanimous in desiring the change. There was no danger of foreign intervention, and the menace of the Carlist wars, which had cursed the First Republic, no longer was imminent. "To the majority of the peoples of the world it seemed that a new era had dawned, that the new government would be both benevolent and fruitful."¹⁴

¹² *Vitrina pintoresca*, pp. 113-18. ¹³ *Los visionarios*, p. 124.

¹⁴ "The Mistakes of the Spanish Republic," *Living Age*, CCCLI (1937), 422.

But Baroja, from the first, was profoundly sceptical. In an interview for the Madrid daily *El Sol* (November 11, 1931), published shortly after the coming of the Republic, he stated that he did not expect Spain to change under the new regime. The thirteen constitutions already fabricated for the country had failed to renovate Spain, and the latest experiment was not essentially different. The root of his scepticism was distrust in the men who founded the new government: "Our revolution was a revolution of the *ateneistas*. In Spain, *ateneista* is a synonym for fantastic, pedantic, lacking in understanding."¹⁵ Among these vacuous literary men, professors, and orators there was lacking the forceful political leader who could break away from the sophistries and platitudes which had nullified Spanish liberalism for over a century.

The prime mistake of the Republican leaders was their inability to act, to make realities of their dreams. Instead of carrying out their reforms, so neatly plotted on paper, they were content to wrangle in the *Cortes* and irritate their enemies with superficial goads. For example, they changed the Spanish flag, abolished the crucifixes from the schools, and in other ways tried to change traditional Spanish customs by decree. The net result was discontent among all classes. Industrialists were forced out of business by petty governmental demands; the workers were disillusioned and went out on strike. The landlords were threatened, but the essence of the agrarian reform remained only a topic for speechmaking. Both the regionalists and the parties of the extreme Left were deeply dissatisfied.¹⁶

Another mistake of the Republic was its despotic and arbitrary attitude. If it had frankly set up a dictatorship and accomplished its ends, its despotism would have been forgivable. But, using liberty as a slogan, it arbitrarily suppressed civil

¹⁵ "The Mistakes of the Spanish Republic," *Living Age*, CCCLI (1937), 425.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 422-23.

liberties. The freedom of the press was at first guaranteed, but shortly after a Law for the Defense of the Republic was passed and newspapers were suppressed as in any autocratic regime. People were thrown into prison without reason or trial. The clergy were persecuted, many times unjustly. The individualist in Baroja was disgusted with such a procedure, and his horror of hypocrisy was thoroughly aroused.¹⁷

Perhaps one of Baroja's most heartfelt objections to the Republic and its founders is one peculiar to an artist. The political battles of the nineteenth century, regardless of the ultimate merit of the theories involved, had a dramatic and somewhat heroic interest, of which Baroja has taken full advantage in his series of historical novels, *Memorias de un hombre de acción*. The liberals, the traditionalists, and even the anarchists produced heroes with color and originality. Of such fiber were Juan Martín, *el Empecinado*, Mina, Torrijos, Riego, and Mariana de Pineda. They made fine material for heroic novels. But in the contemporary epoch, the dominant tone of which might be summed up in the typical Spanish Republican, the social milieu is not favorable to heroism.¹⁸ The Republicans lack the heroic elements necessary for a party of real protest: ". . . they pretend to be heroes and yet have done nothing heroic."¹⁹ "The parties which have lacked heroes have been precisely the ones which have triumphed in contemporary politics, the Republicans and the Socialists. I cannot recall one among them who has in him heroic stuff."²⁰ Besides his keen interest in the contemporary scene and his artistic interpretation of it, one frequently encounters this theme of lament for the passing of the exciting figures and events of

¹⁷ "Las épocas revolucionarias," *Ahora*, April 7, 1935, p. 5.

¹⁸ *Vitrina pintoresca*, pp. 127 and 134.

¹⁹ *Aurora roja*, p. 145.

²⁰ *Vitrina pintoresca*, p. 134.

years gone by, a theme which some critics have described as essentially romantic.

SOCIALISM

The Republic was not created through the efforts of the Republicans alone; they were aided by the Spanish Socialists. As later events have indicated, their differences in theory and tactics may be fundamentally irreconcilable. But the Socialists, like the Republicans, are targets for Baroja's satirical thrusts.

He claims that the future paradises which motivate the Socialists and other Marxians do not interest him,²¹ and yet in his novels and essays he finds numerous occasions to discuss them. Although he confesses that he has read and studied little Marxian theory, his denial of its value is unequivocal. Some compare Marx and Darwin; but the comparison, Baroja says, is inexact. Darwin's evolutionary theories have scientific value and have been supported by biological and anthropological research, but Marx's theories are only shaky hypotheses. His predictions, based on the materialistic conception of history, in the majority of cases have not been substantiated. Marx predicted that the social revolution would come first in a highly industrialized country; actually it took place in agrarian Russia. The concentration of wealth in a few hands was to be the inevitable consequence of capitalism, according to Marxian economics; Baroja declares that this has not proved true with any uniformity.

He recognizes the fact of class struggle and its importance according to socialist theory, but says: "I do not believe that the purely economic tendency to class struggle will constantly prevail. . . . It will pass away or at least have periods of truce."²² Moreover he laments that the prevalence of the theory of class struggle may seriously retard the development

²¹ "La sabiduría comunista," *Ahora*, February 24, 1935, p. 5.

²² *Divagaciones sobre la cultura*, p. 112.

of culture, and may possibly bring on a period of decadence in modern civilization.²³ The dialectics of materialism, derived from Hegel, are called a "simple-minded illusion." Brilliant thinkers, such as Dostoevsky, Renan, and Nietzsche, knew the theories of Marx, but rejected them.²⁴

If Marxism were only a theory, it might at least be worthy of examination; but Baroja contends that it appears to be just one more messianic Utopia, a dogma which has too much religious fanaticism to appeal to him. There are those who think that God is necessary to Spain's salvation; others put their faith in socialism; both are superstitious groups who "believe that ideas are realities."²⁵

Like all good individualists, Baroja also fears the tendency of socialism to make of the state a dominating and oppressive machine. It will lead to "an assumed moral perfection and at the same time to unity, universality, discipline, and the loss of individual identity."²⁶ He conceives of the socialist state as a protean monster, under whose paw armies of regimented functionaries would carry out horribly systematized labor projects.²⁷ This result would be particularly offensive to the Spaniards, who, according to Baroja, are opposed to unification and internationalism, in spite of their lip service to the unity of Christianity. The socialistic state would tend in its educational standardization to create a race of robot specialists at the expense of the individual development of the whole man. Socialism carried into practice would be only an aggravation of the statistical, quantitative dependence on economics which Baroja finds so distasteful in modern ideas of "progress": "The future and even the present belongs to these socialist profes-

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁴ *Los visionarios*, pp. 151-52.

²⁵ *La ciudad de la niebla*, p. 87.

²⁶ *Los visionarios*, p. 150.

²⁷ *Aurora roja*, p. 197.

sors, who study, count, measure, make statistics, and are motivated solely by their heads."²⁸ "Who would have believed . . . that the whole fierce struggle for liberty . . . would end in anything as prosaic as . . . socialism, in a way of life directed by economics and statistics."²⁹

But Baroja's attack on socialism is not confined to its ideology. Possibly the cardinal sin in any proponent of a cause is in his eyes that of hypocrisy, and he often imputes that sin to the Socialists. Their charlatanism and hypocrisy have repelled him continually. France, self-confessed defender of the Rights of Man, exploits her colonial troops, and yet the Socialists of all countries acquiesce without protest.³⁰ In a novel concerning London he cites the case of a demagogue who preached socialism and abstinence and then got drunk on the contributions given to the cause.³¹ The Spanish Socialists, claiming to represent the working class, compromised with the Dictatorship on wage scales but refuse to assist fellow-radicals when they are in difficulties.³² Their insincerity is motivated by self-interest. Most of the members of the socialist trade-unions belong because of pure selfishness. They use the unions solely for their own advantage and soon become despotic and authoritarian. They are the germ of a new bourgeois class "which has all the undesirable traits of the old, its petulance and immorality, the same enthusiasm for making speeches, and the same old parliamentary tricks."³³ Because of their selfishness and their preoccupation with their own narrow interests, having no concern, for example, with the farmer's problems, with

²⁸ *La ciudad de la niebla*, p. 142.

²⁹ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 159.

³⁰ *Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, pp. 209-10.

³¹ *La ciudad de la niebla*, p. 225.

³² *La familia de Errotacho*, p. 289.

³³ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 26.

women's difficulties, or with the intellectuals, they have failed to arouse genuine enthusiasm among the Spaniards.³⁴

The Socialists' activities in the government of the Second Republic have been bitterly attacked by Baroja. They attempted to force upon Spanish industry labor reforms which bear no relation to the realities of the situation. Without reckoning the resources of an industry, they have legalized fantastic demands for higher wages and shorter hours which have ruined many enterprises. In the rural villages the socialistic decrees of the government went directly contrary to time-honored and harmless customs.³⁵

In spite of his adverse criticism of the Socialists, Baroja concedes an admiration for sincere, intelligent Marxians, and in *Aurora roja* gives one of them a full and unbiased hearing. Pepe Morales is "a strong and brilliant man with socialist ideas . . . he was typical of the intelligent, thoughtful workers."³⁶ In the course of a discussion with an anarchist, he gives a reasoned exposition of the socialist critique of society, advancing answers, incidentally, to some of Baroja's own objections. For example, to the charge of uniformity and standardization of life under socialism, he replies: "We do not desire uniformity in the life of a nation. . . . Let each district have its autonomy; let each man live as he pleases without bothering the rest. All that we wish to do is to organize the social mass and give concrete form to the aspiration of all: a fuller life."³⁷

Setting aside the question of the faults and virtues of socialism, Baroja has said on more than one occasion that some form of collective organization on socialistic lines is the inevi-

³⁴ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 46; *Los visionarios*, pp. 128-29.

³⁵ "The Mistakes of the Spanish Republic," *Living Age*, CCCLI (1937), 424-25.

³⁶ *Aurora roja*, p. 134.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

table outline of the future state: ". . . I imagine that the future will be socialist; but, in spite of this, I feel a profound dislike for socialist doctrines."³⁸

Whether or not Baroja's attitude toward socialism is truly liberal is open to controversy. Many Liberals, objecting to socialism for reasons identical to those of Baroja, believe that there is a basic and irreconcilable antagonism between the two philosophies: "Liberalism will probably retain its distinction from socialism in taking for its chief test of policy the freedom of the individual citizen rather than the strength of the state."³⁹ Croce classes socialism with Catholicism and absolute monarchy as opposing faiths confronting liberalism.⁴⁰ Certain Socialists, on the other hand, among them Eduard Bernstein, have claimed that "socialism is the legitimate heir of liberalism," and that its principles are all aimed to give liberty to individual ability by freeing it from economic slavery.⁴¹ Baroja recognizes both points of view, but in the final analysis seems to share Croce's conviction.

COMMUNISM

The communist program, as differentiated by the Third International from that of the older Socialists, is equally scorned by Baroja. His comments on Russia, the one nation where communism as a philosophy and a practice is being tried, are a compendium of his criticism. Shortly after the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in Russia, he professed an open attitude toward the experiment. He remarks on the difficulties

³⁸ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 27.

³⁹ J. A. Hobson, *The Crisis of Liberalism* (London: F. S. King, 1909), p. 93.

⁴⁰ Benedetto Croce, *op. cit.*, pp. 34 ff.

⁴¹ H. W. Laidler, *History of Socialist Thought* (New York: Crowell, 1927), p. 314.

not necessarily connected with their principles which beset the Bolsheviks: the size of the country, foreign intervention, and the underdeveloped state of Russia. For Lenin he had a certain admiration, especially for his "rigid and unwavering consistency."⁴² But he later declares that if Lenin had lived to see the actual development of communism, he would have despised and discarded it.⁴³ As the Bolshevik program has unfolded in Russia, Baroja has become more and more condemnatory. In 1924, speaking of postwar Europe, he said: "The world is like a field of ashes; and meanwhile the sinister flame of the Russian Revolution burns, a flame which gives no heat, and which, instead of leaving for history a bloody, human drama, only shows, in the midst of unheard-of horrors, the doctrinaire disputes of Marxian pedants."⁴⁴

One of his principal objections to the Russian Communists is the Jewish element among them. Faithful to Nietzsche, he has always had the most caustic dislike for certain vices which he considers typical of them: snobbery and envious greed.⁴⁵ He distrusts communism in practice when he hears of its Jewish leaders and their wives displaying themselves in fashionable Swiss hotels, elegantly dressed in furs and jewels.⁴⁶

Although he admits that he has never been in Russia and does not read Russian, the reports that he has received have formed for him an exceedingly unfavorable idea of certain specific conditions in that country. He disapproves especially of their ideals of communal living—apartment houses with common dining halls, baths, and dormitories—as being contrary to human nature. The communist goal of minimizing

⁴² *La busca*, p. 10.

⁴³ *El nocturno del hermano Beltrán*, p. 203.

⁴⁴ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 37.

⁴⁵ *Los visionarios*, p. 152.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

the importance of family life is not only repulsive but not even modern. It is only a revival of the type of Jesuit regime which prevailed for a time in Paraguay. That a mother should turn her baby over to a community nursery to be cared for by the state violates, according to Baroja, a fundamental law of nature. "I fail to understand why Russian communism tries such ridiculous and ingenuous experiments, appropriate for musical comedies."⁴⁷

Concerning another important attempt to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Bela Kun revolution in Hungary, Baroja also expresses his disgust. Stolz, in *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, probably represents the author when he calls the Hungarian Soviet experiment "a series of auto-horns or loudspeakers repeating platitudes."⁴⁸ In such a revolution culture, history, and intelligence play no part; shouting and play acting are the only ingredients.

With the recent rise of the Communist party in Spain as a political factor, the most important question for Baroja in regard to communism is its possibility and desirability in his homeland. Fermín, in *Los visionarios*,⁴⁹ holds a long conversation with an Andalusian doctor, a Communist, on this point. The doctor is convinced that economic laws will compel Spain to change from an individualist nation to one with more social solidarity and that a communist state will surely come with the gradual political education of the masses. Fermín protests that it is absurd to think that in a country with so little social discipline or sense of co-operation any sort of a collectivist society can be set up. If Spaniards are unable to meet an elementary social obligation, such as arriving at an appointment on time, what hope can there be for a highly organized, eco-

⁴⁷ "Amenidades comunistas," *Ahora*, February 3, 1935, p. 5.

⁴⁸ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 37.

⁴⁹ *Los visionarios*, pp. 140-55.

conomic commonwealth? "All of us are undisciplined in Spain. We have never been able to form definite schools of thought in any line; eminent men are greeted with indifference and even hostility."⁵⁰

Under the stress of civil strife, the Communist party in Spain has realized a remarkable change in strategy. Instead of attacking property and democracy, it is professing to defend liberty and the Spanish Republic. In Baroja's opinion this transformation is nothing more than insincere pedantry. "Communism is a doctrine of submission, devised for the barracks or a convent. What sort of liberty can communism offer?"⁵¹

Even if the worker in Spain were given the full value of his labor in terms of the Marxian theory of value, he would still lead a poor and miserable life, owing to the natural poverty of the country. In Andalusia the agricultural workers are lazy and undisciplined; they would rather work for a mediocre wage than have the responsibility of managing their own land in a communal fashion. In the north of Spain, although the peasants who now support themselves on their own land would welcome the socialization of the land if they received high daily wages, they also confess that it would be impossible to finance materially higher wages, since the land is yielding very nearly its highest productivity at the present time. No real communal farming could be carried on in most parts of the peninsula because of the broken, scattered nature of the agricultural territories: "To make day-laborers of the peasants, giving them a wage sufficient for them to live upon decently, seems to me impossible in Spain. Except in a few small districts the country is not rich enough for such a procedure."⁵²

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁵¹ "The Mistakes of the Spanish Republic," *Living Age*, CCCLI (1937), 426.

⁵² "La sabiduría comunista," *Ahora*, February 24, 1935, p. 5.

Becoming still more practical, he states that communism cannot be feasible in Spain now, because Spain is surrounded by capitalist countries which would immediately pounce on a communist Spain and crush it. With all these factors in mind, Baroja concludes that communism "in a country such as Spain would be absolute misery."⁵³

His judgment of communism is of peculiar importance in relation to his liberalism, since there is a tendency among some commentators to feel that the greatest conflict at present in social thought is one between the two systems: "The swing of the pendulum lies no longer between an almost medieval despotism and constitutional government but rather between liberalism and communism."⁵⁴

ANARCHISM

I have mentioned before the fact that radicalism in Spain has frequently assumed the characteristic form of anarchism rather than socialism. As a careful observer of the Spanish scene Baroja has shown that both the theory and the practical results of anarchism have a powerful fascination for him. Nearly all of his books contain references to it, and several are concerned directly with a kind of anatomy of anarchism. In one of the latter, *Aurora roja*, he provides in fictional form a conscientious and detailed study of the movement and its representatives. It will clarify this discussion if I summarize his classification of the anarchists as he has known them in Spain.⁵⁵

First he describes the rebellious individual, the philosophical anarchist, who, by either nature or intellectual conviction,

⁵³ *La busca*, Prólogo, p. 10.

⁵⁴ H. R. G. Greaves, "Politics in the Spanish Republic," *Political Quarterly*, III (1932), 525.

⁵⁵ *Aurora roja*, pp. 104-5.

is irked by authority. He cares little about concrete economic problems, and his protest is entirely personal and egoistic. The second type is the humanitarian anarchist, represented by one of the main figures of the novel, Juan, an artist. His anarchism arises from a sincere sympathy for the misery and suffering of the poor and oppressed; it is directed by sentiment, emotion, and a religious faith in the goodness of man if loosed from the shackles of authority, rather than by the intellect. It results in a passionate hatred of any and all authority; he dreads socialistic as well as capitalistic regulation and repression. He will go to any lengths of terrorism and destruction to further his dream of an altruistic, completely free society. The third type is the opposite extreme, the anarchist with parliamentary inclinations, who is really more of a Republican than an anarchist; he wants to formalize the anarchist meetings and talk politics. The last type belongs to the lunatic fringe; he is the insanely destructive anarchist whose aim is annihilation, without any fixed ideal to motivate him.

The program of individual terror and violence, represented in the last kind of anarchist described, is the tenet of anarchism most obviously repugnant to the average citizen. There is no doubt of Baroja's censure of this procedure. In *Aurora roja* he gives a terrible and vivid picture of one of the numerous anarchist bomb outrages in a Barcelona theater. Manuel, the novel's principal character, as he sees the dead and the dying writhing in blood and agony, exclaims that the perpetrators are fully as base and despicable as the cruellest exploiters. Propaganda by violence, according to Pepe Morales, is nothing more than a crime. Acceptance of such principles could justify the violence of the worst bandit or despot. With this criticism, Manuel agrees.

But the chief reproach which Baroja casts at anarchism in Spain is based on different grounds. Even more than those of socialism or communism, the doctrines of anarchism are a re-

ligious dogma: "Really the only revolutionary philosophy to-day among the masses is the anarchist; but the anarchist philosophy is instinctive, dependent on the sentiments, and it assumes the character of a religious dogma, which is absurd and childish."⁵⁶

The anarchists always consider themselves on the eve of a miraculous change: ". . . they awaited the revolution as the early Christians awaited the second coming of Christ."⁵⁷ Furthermore, among the votaries of this new religion, Baroja finds too much phrasemongering and rhetorical oratory; the vain discussion of metaphysical and ethical problems gives them an air of dogmatic and intransigent apostles; inextricably mingled with their humanitarian idealism is the Latin's love for the *beau geste* in action and in word.⁵⁸

Baroja claims to be repelled by all types of political utopias, from Plato's *Republic* to the dreams of H. G. Wells, and finds the "pseudo philosophy of the anarchists," with its impractical and unrealizable visions, particularly boring. For example, he presents an unpleasant picture of prerevolutionary Russian students in Geneva in *El mundo es así*. Living a dull life, they were nevertheless imbued with fanatical, anarchistic ideas; "By drawing apart from life and reading too much they had lost their sense of reality; their ideas were derived from books and lacked roots in life itself."⁵⁹ The ideals of the Anarcho-Syndicalists in contemporary Spain disgust Fermín in *Los visionarios* because of their childish and utopian lack of realism: ". . . the harmonious co-operation of all, without guiding direction, seems to me to be on the same level with the idea that the scattered parts of a machine should assemble

⁵⁶ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 159.

⁵⁷ *Aurora roja*, p. 197.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 154 and 202-3.

⁵⁹ *El mundo es así*, p. 60.

themselves without the direction of an engineer or a mechanic."⁶⁰

Baroja is critical not only of the theoretical intentions of the anarchists but also of their tactics. The radicalism of their groups ultimately wearies and disgusts the workers and defeats the ends of their propaganda; moreover, inherent in their individualistic philosophy are the germs of their own dissolution, and with their constant bickering and internal dissensions they tend to break up into smaller, useless groups, incapable of action. Each petty journalist, the Sancho Panza of anarchism, has his clique of admirers who proclaim that they have the only true gospel.⁶¹

The *reductio ad absurdum* of the disintegrating kernel of anarchism is set forth in a strange dream of Manuel after his brother Juan has died. Anarchy has triumphed; there is a procession in which statues are carried, all dedicated to the catchwords of the anarchists—Truth, Nature, Goodness. But at that triumphant moment, Juan's anarchist associates shout, "Down with anarchy!"⁶²

Since the outbreak of the civil war, the anarchists, who have defended the Loyalist government, have developed other characteristics which dismay Baroja. Having achieved a share in the government, they have adopted the very measures which their philosophy so severely condemns—censorship, executions, arbitrary authority, etc.⁶³

Anarchist characters are common in the novels of Baroja, and many of them exemplify the author's objections to the movement. In *La dama errante* there are several: Brull, a vain,

⁶⁰ *Los visionarios*, pp. 267–68.

⁶¹ *Aurora roja*, pp. 198–99.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁶³ "The Mistakes of the Spanish Republic," *Living Age*, CCCLI (1937), 426.

pedantic lover of phrases, desirous of attracting attention, whose metaphysical ideals are probably motivated by an acid stomach or a bad liver;⁶⁴ a young Russian girl who professes anarchistic ideas, a petulant, unintelligent Jewess; Dr. Aracil, the protagonist's father, given to vacuous oratory and lacking real enthusiasm for the new life.⁶⁵ In *Mala hierba*, Mingote is treacherous and ungrateful but nevertheless preaches "anarchic-philanthropic-collectivist ideas."⁶⁶ Describing an attempted revolt of the Anarcho-Syndicalists in *La familia de Errotacho*, Baroja portrays among the rebels several psychopathic cases: a man with a persecution complex, a lunatic who lived in a dream world, and a vegetarian crackpot with confused ideas.⁶⁷

However, his objections to the anarchist mode of thought do not constitute a blanket condemnation. There are two factors in their ideology which command sympathy from him: the sincere, self-denying love of humanity which he says is characteristic of some anarchists; and their function as implacable critics of existing institutions. In spite of the silly utopianism of the Andalusian Syndicalists, Fermín says: "This Spain, a bit mystical and revolutionary, is the most friendly Spain. . . . They are well-intentioned people who think that they can bring about a great change without victims."⁶⁸ Again he declares that instead of attempting to stamp them out in hatred, he would recognize "that in the majority of cases they have been brave, generous, self-denying, and would say to them: your time has passed; enough of useless heroics; away home with you."⁶⁹ Although Baroja scorns, as we have seen,

⁶⁴ *La dama errante*, pp. 66 and 140.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶⁶ *Mala hierba*, pp. 64-65.

⁶⁷ *La familia de Errotacho*, p. 124.

⁶⁸ *Los visionarios*, p. 260.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

their vanity and bombast, he confesses that they are generous and well-intentioned, and certainly more sincere than most Socialists.

In *El mundo es así*, the anarchist students at a prerevolutionary Russian university were inspired by Tolstoy's works to embrace a mystical humanitarianism which made them willing to sacrifice physical comfort and wealth for the sake of the good of the common man.⁷⁰ As Baroja phrases it elsewhere, the idealistic side of anarchism is "a dream of idyllic humanity, a sweet and pious dream, noble and childish at the same time."⁷¹ He recognizes that the emotional content of the doctrine is its real appeal to the desperate, hungry, working classes: "Among the thousands of anarchists who are to be found in the world, those who have a clear and complete idea of anarchist doctrine would number not more than five hundred. The rest are anarchists as thirty years ago they were federalists, and before that progressives, and before that convinced monarchists. A sociologist might be an anarchist by a scientific aberration; but the worker will join the party because at present it is the party of the desperate and the hungry."⁷² With that appeal Baroja apparently sympathizes.

From the point of view of personal valor and heroism, he is emphatic in his praise of some of the anarchists. In his recent collection of essays, *Vitrina pintoresca*, he derides most modern political partisans for their lack of heroic qualities, and brings forth as a contrast the anarchists of the notorious Casas Viejas incident. On January 11, 1933, inspired by the widespread revolts in other parts of Spain, a group of anarchists, or *Comunistas Libertarios*, in the town of Casas Viejas ran up the red and black flag over the town and proclaimed the "New

⁷⁰ *El mundo es así*, p. 42.

⁷¹ *Mala hierba*, p. 297.

⁷² *Aurora roja*, pp. 248-49.

Day." Although Casas Viejas is only a small and remote village in the sun-parched hills of southern Spain, it was not long before the Civil Guards had sent reinforcements from Medina Sidonia and had crushed the abortive anarchist state. But with heroic obstinacy, the aged anarchist leader, Seisdedos, barricaded himself in his thatched hut along with eight others, including two young women. There they doggedly withstood the government forces until the hut was burned down and the occupants were shot.

Baroja was greatly impressed by the bravery of Seisdedos and the women: "If I were an Andalusian anarchist, I would fervently propose that the pictures of the old bearded bores be taken down from the walls of the C.N.T. union halls and be replaced with the likeness of the anarchist girl . . . of Casas Viejas."⁷³

The critical aspect of anarchism also attracts Baroja. Anarchists like Nietzsche for the same reason that he does. They feel that Nietzsche is one of them, since he did so much to break down the old idols of conventional society; "Nietzsche's books are the anarchist's bomb in the world of ideas."⁷⁴

Manuel, in *Aurora roja*, weighing the merits of anarchism and socialism, finds anarchism useful in the necessary campaign to change antiquated value patterns. Modern anarchists, in a lesser degree, play a role similar to that of the critical *philosophes* of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Fermín likewise has a certain respect for the critical function of anarchism.⁷⁶

With these somewhat eclectic judgments about anarchism before us, it is not easy to dismiss Baroja bluntly as an anarchist without qualification, as some critics have done, or to

⁷³ *Vitrina pintoresca*, pp. 134 and 138.

⁷⁴ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 31; see also *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 172.

⁷⁵ *Aurora roja*, p. 196.

⁷⁶ *Los visionarios*, p. 253.

state categorically what his net attitude is toward the anarchist doctrines. His most pertinent and general discussion of the ultimate value of anarchism is found in *La dama errante*.⁷⁷ In these pages three different attitudes toward that social philosophy are presented through the opinions of Dr. Iturriz, Aracil, and Venancio. Iturriz also appears as a character in *El árbol de la ciencia*, and his conflict with the method of science has been referred to above. Here, after dwelling on the ridiculous utopianism of the anarchists, he declares that they nevertheless do have their uses, principal among which is the function of awakening Spanish life. The best method to accomplish this end, says Iturriz, is that of individual struggle, "thrusting aside the old moral code, religion, honor . . . reducing the state to a mechanical contraption." He then proceeds to explain the meaning of individualism in his brand of anarchism: ". . . it does not mean the complete disappearance of law and discipline; it means the death of one sort of law and the establishment of another, the substitution of an ethical system which is contrary to natural instincts by another which will be in harmony with them."

To the obvious difficulty of reconciling the conflict between the individual and the general good under such an arrangement, he answers: "As far as I am concerned the individual will always be right against the mass." The natural brutality of men should be left free to stimulate society constantly: "I am convinced that we must create an oligarchy, an aristocracy of individualists, new, brutal, strong, harsh, violent, which will perturb society, and which will be destroyed as soon as it begins to decay." But Iturriz' conception of the duties of anarchism is based on the destructive and creative power of ideas alone. Dynamite anarchism he does not countenance.

Aracil agrees with some of Iturriz' notions; but he em-

⁷⁷ Chapter v.

phasizes the fact that time for change in Spain is the supreme necessity; we must not sweep out the old without selecting the good from the decaying civilization. The basis for selection should be a liberal socialism in the economic realm and anarchism in moral values.

Venancio, a scientist, opposes all such vague, theoretical formulas, which appear to him to be insincere nonsense: "All these metaphysical and ethical systems, such as anarchism, seemed to him to be pedantic rigmarole, verbiage like *Krausismo*." His reaction to anarchism is to propose concretely that more trees be planted in Spain and the productivity of the land improved thereby.

Which of these conceptions, each fully and ably expressed by the author, represents the author's attitude? Aracil may be dismissed as an improbable spokesman; he is described by Baroja as superficial, addicted to sophistry and rhetoric. Iturriz on the other hand, although he is presented as an unsocial man with an ironic, taciturn nature, is really "a man of integrity." Considering himself a blunt, crude *hidalgo*, he actually is very sentimental. Venancio also is sympathetically described: he is kind and ingenuous, devoted to his science, "a sincere man who carried his ideas into practice." Probably both men represent the novelist in varying moods; Iturriz' fierce, individualistic criticism of society, leading to a reign of natural ethics, and the practical disgust expressed by Venancio for anarchistic pedantry are both facets of the author's personality. He himself in Nietzsche's terminology describes the conflict as one between Dionysus and Apollo: "I used to feel convinced that I was a Dionysian. I was attracted by the dynamic, dramatic, turbulent. Naturally I was an anarchist. Am I still? I think so. In those days I was enthusiastic for the future and I hated the past. Little by little my excitement has waned . . . little by little I have realized that if the cult of Dionysus makes the will leap into action, the cult of Apollo

leads one's intellect to rest on the harmony of eternal lines. And there are great attractions in both cults."⁷⁸

BAROJA'S REALIZATION OF SOCIAL EVILS

While Baroja rejects democracy, republicanism, socialism, communism, and anarchism in their present crystallized forms as acceptable solutions for the social future, he is not indifferent to the poverty and misery which in principle are the *raison d'être* of these movements for change. "It is certain," says an American critic, "that a profound sense of the evil of existing institutions lies behind every page he has written."⁷⁹ In his trilogy *La lucha por la vida*, Baroja draws a detailed and naturalistic picture of the suffering and hopelessness in the tenement districts of Madrid. Sick, drunken men, quarreling women, prostitutes, filthy beggars, all pass in sordid procession; as a contrast we see elegant dandies who laugh and joke with the prostitutes, indifferent to the sordid poverty everywhere.⁸⁰

In *La ciudad de la niebla* the author gives a pathetic description of the downtrodden social outcasts in London, the capital of one of the countries which has supposedly advanced most. "And there begin to appear endless slums, monotonous rows of low, ugly shacks, all grey and blackened . . . unhappy hives built by men who think they are philanthropists."⁸¹

In the pages of one of his more recent novels, *Los visionarios*, there are numerous references to the deplorable conditions of the Andalusian agricultural workers: "The reapers work from dawn to dark; their shirts seem made of plaster, they are so encrusted with sweat and dust. . . . The people

⁷⁸ *Juventud, egolatría*, p. 33.

⁷⁹ John Dos Passos, *Rosinante to the Road Again* (New York: Dcran, 1922), p. 95.

⁸⁰ *La busca*, p. 293.

⁸¹ *La ciudad de la niebla*, chapter v.

live in terrible conditions and only exist from day to day. What sort of a viewpoint can these poor laborers have? They do not earn enough to support their families, and often have to stay their hunger with puny figs, bad wine, and detestable tobacco."⁸²

Nor does Baroja assume the patrician attitude that such misfortunes are a sad but inescapable defect in the nature of human beings. While he is occasionally pessimistic about the underlying spirit of slavery among the poor,⁸³ he generally places the blame for their miserable condition squarely on the social injustice of our civilization. "Experience has taught me that there is no justice in our society; there is no Christian justice and not even what one might call biological justice."⁸⁴ Neither the good nor the strong win in the struggle for existence today; only the schemers and charlatans survive. Modern civilization is made for the rich. Formerly the gap between the rich and the poor in Spain was not so great; both shared common discomforts. Now the rich live behind "a wall of cotton," completely indifferent to the need and suffering of the poor.⁸⁵ Justice in the modern state has always protected the interests of the ruling classes: "What a marvelous system! Every last one of the lawyers, shysters or not, was able to exploit the humble, the poor in spirit, and protect the sacred interests of society, by causing the balance of justice to incline always in favor of the moneybags."⁸⁶

One of his favorite targets is the Spanish aristocracy. Although no advocate of democracy, as we have seen, Baroja feels that the aristocrats and pseudo aristocrats contribute

⁸² *Los visionarios*, p. 155.

⁸³ *El árbol de la ciencia*, pp. 272 and 307.

⁸⁴ *El gran torbellino del mundo*, p. 103.

⁸⁵ *Mala hierba*, p. 188.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-74; *El árbol de la ciencia*, pp. 295-96.

nothing to Spanish society and are useless and undesirable,⁸⁷ a race of incapable degenerates and alcoholics, lacking in culture, intelligence, and, worst of all, in directive social intelligence.⁸⁸

He writes: "In Spain one may categorically state that the higher you climb on the ladder of aristocracy the more ignorance and mouthing of phrases you find. The Spanish aristocracy is linked to the latifundia system, the vast pasture lands and hunting preserves from which it bars peasant settlers, to bullfighting, to hypocrisy, to political graft, to all that is sad in Spanish life. And to all this is tied the degeneration of the people who progressively become poorer and more anemic."⁸⁹

A social hierarchy is necessary, but it should be a rational one, not made up of corrupt *nouveaux riches*.⁹⁰ Culture, which Baroja deifies, is aristocratic; the cat, which he also admires, is an aristocratic animal;⁹¹ but it is the aristocracy of talent and intelligence to which he refers.

It may seem difficult to reconcile Baroja's scorn of democracy, his recognition of the need of an intelligent aristocracy, with his equally sincere pity for the misery of the poor. These two tendencies, one aristocratic in Baroja's special sense of the word and the other sentimental and full of pity, run throughout his novels. Yet the two currents are not entirely incongruous. Baroja says: "If it should come to a showdown and they should ask us: 'Should the stupid, from whom we can expect nothing, be sacrificed for the benefit of others who are more intelligent?' our answer would be an unequivocal 'No'."⁹²

⁸⁷ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 336.

⁸⁸ *La feria de los discretos*, p. 182.

⁸⁹ *El mundo es así*, pp. 281-82.

⁹⁰ *Momentum catastrophicum*, p. 59.

⁹¹ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 181.

⁹² *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 220.

CHAPTER FIVE

BAROJA AND SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF LIBERALISM

THUS FAR the discussion of Baroja's ideology has been chiefly concerned with his attitude toward the general outline of liberalism and the political theories related to it. What does he say about the more specific problems which have been integrally connected with liberal programs?

NATIONALISM AND WAR

Although nationalism may not be a necessary characteristic of liberal thinking, and in the new liberalism actually becomes an opposing faith, historically during the nineteenth century it was such an intimate partner of liberalism in Europe that it merits discussion here.

There is nothing equivocal about Baroja's opinion of nationalism. He writes: "I find nothing useful, nothing profitable, in nationalism; it seems to me that it is very far from being the political ideal of the future. . . . Liberal or not, it is nothing but history now."¹ When a Catalan newspaper attacked him as a nationalist, he said: "I am an enemy not only of nationalism but also of the very idea of a fatherland."² His conception of patriotism is typical of many of the writers of the Generation of 1898: he is convinced that most of what passes as patriotism in Spain is theatrical and shallow. Baroja's manner of loving his country consists neither in claiming that everything Spanish is good nor in accepting only foreign importations as desirable; it involves looking at the realities of Spain clearly, sincerely recognizing her de-

¹ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, pp. 151, 156.

² *Las horas solitarias*, p. 86.

fects, and attempting to remedy them: "I do not seem to be much of a patriot; but nevertheless I am. My viewpoint toward the world is not restricted by the fact that I am a Spaniard and a Basque, and if I believe that a fresh outlook can be gained by taking an internationalist standpoint, I have no objection to relinquishing for the moment my feelings as a Spaniard and a Basque. . . . I would like Spain to be the best corner in the world and the Basque region the best corner in Spain."³

Baroja has conscientiously used this formula in his novels. Many of his works are direct studies, analytical and sometimes caustic, of Spain; the others, in which the scene is laid outside of Spain, are nevertheless directly related to the problems of the Spaniards.

In recent years the idea of racial superiority, popularized by Gobineau decades ago, has become the basis for new nationalistic cults, especially in Germany. Baroja rejects completely this hypothesis: To say that the Aryan race is inherently more noble than others is scientifically untenable, according to his manner of thinking. Today there are no pure races and certainly no definite psychological traits characteristic of a particular race. The term Aryan is really only a linguistic concept and has nothing to do with nobility or the lack of it. The traits of modern peoples are conditioned more by historical and environmental factors than by race.⁴

In opposition to all such nationalist dogmas, Baroja professes an ideal of internationalism: "The world for all men: that would be my motto and . . . I would be contented with another: Europe for the Europeans."⁵ It must be ad-

³ *Juventud, egolatría*, pp. 73-74; see also *Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, p. 200.

⁴ "Las razas nobles," *Ahora*, February 10, 1935, p. 7; *Momentum catastrophicum*, p. 25.

⁵ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 86.

mitted that his sentiments toward other nations are not always congruous with his expressed devotion to international brotherhood. His distaste for the French is apparent in nearly all his writings,⁶ and the Spanish Americans in general he finds disagreeable. Although he praises the English in some respects, he disdains their hypocrisy and cant.⁷

Baroja has never ceased to inveigh against militarism and war, close allies of nationalism. "It is in my blood to be anti-militaristic. . . . I have always had a profound dislike for barracks and army officers."⁸ As a medical student in Madrid, he refused to do his military service, and was finally excused by Romanones. The army personnel seems to him overbearing and ridiculous; in Spain, at least, the army only serves to amuse the nursemaids and the children with their gaudy maneuvers. He says again: ". . . the organized army is a hateful thing to me. An army camp might have a certain attraction, but not the barracks. It is just a pile of human garbage."⁹

Baroja feels that the army has never brought any real benefit to Spain. The history of the nineteenth century in Spain has demonstrated that. Modern civilization needs fewer soldiers and more wise, good men.¹⁰ Although today science co-operates in the horror of war, Baroja hopes that it will eventually put an end to war and banish the medieval ideas of national honor which make it possible.¹¹ To the platitude that war is "a tonic for the weakened nerves of sedentary races" one of Baroja's characters answers that it is good only for munition makers.¹²

⁶ See especially *Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, pp. 191-96.

⁷ *La ciudad de la niebla*, p. 46. ⁸ *Juventud, egolatría*, p. 212.

⁹ *El gran torbellino del mundo*, p. 156.

¹⁰ *Juventud, egolatría*, pp. 327-30.

¹¹ *El tablado de Arlequín*, pp. 182-84.

¹² *Paradox, rey*, p. 180.

The whole novel, *Paradox, rey*, is a fantastic satire of the militaristic and imperialistic policy of certain European nations: The French send their troops to bring "civilization" to Bu-tata in northern Africa. They do so with horrible slaughter and brutality. After the French occupation, we see the results of imperialist "civilization": "Before, there was no illness here, but we have brought it with us. We have presented these good savages with smallpox, tuberculosis, syphilis, and alcohol. They are not immune to all these diseases as we are, and, of course, they succumb."¹³ And yet the French priest praises the army as "the school of all virtues, the protector of human rights. . . . Let us give thanks to God, my brothers, because real civilization, the civilization of the peace and brotherhood of Christ, has come to stay in the kingdom of Uganga."¹⁴

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN

A concern for the social freedom of women is often regarded as a tenet of neo-liberalism: "The open road for women is one application, and a very big one, of the open road for talent, and to secure them both is of the essence of liberalism."¹⁵ In Spain the emancipation of women from conventional limitations is complicated by the particularly strong tradition which determines the sphere of woman's activities and by the intense devotion of Spanish women to the Catholic Church.

According to Baroja, the Church, which he calls a Semitic sect, has always considered woman "a lascivious and dangerous animal" and has convinced her of her inferiority.¹⁶ The

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

¹⁵ L. T. Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁶ *El mundo es así*, p. 286.

Spanish ideal of honor, which Baroja labels a piece of fanaticism, is also Semitic in origin, from the Moors. The Church and the ideal of honor have, in Baroja's eyes, made of Spanish women a group of stupid creatures. They have no intellectual nor moral personality. They read few books, and their sole interests seem to be gossip and marriage.¹⁷ "The life of the Spanish woman today is truly a sad one. Without sensuality or romanticism, her religion merely a habit, her conception of love as eternal lost, there remains no spiritual support for the Spanish woman. Thus she must be and is in the family a depressive and enervating element, which robs man of strength and dignity. Her whole plan consists in living on the defensive, acting a part."¹⁸

Their first thoughts about marriage, he continues, are economic; they seem to be insensible to everything but tangible wealth and worldly success. After marriage, instead of cooperating with their husbands, they dominate them for their mercenary ends; their net influence is reactionary and gives Spanish life a hypocritical aspect. The Spanish custom of confining women's activities entirely to the home prevents them from influencing social life through their intelligence and good instincts.

What must be done, thinks Baroja, is to educate women to collaborate in the problems of society outside the home: "Neither man nor woman should impose their respective points of view on life. Any society which attempts to eliminate the influence of women is an anomalous one. In Spanish society woman is kept in the home; she is not allowed to exercise the influence of her intelligence or her heart, and the result is that she dominates through her baser instincts.

"And this is what must be avoided. In order to avoid it, it is necessary to *secularize* woman, take her out of the cloister

¹⁷ *El mundo es así*, pp. 285-86.

¹⁸ *La dama errante*, p. 14.

of the home, where she conspires against human progress, make of her a collaborator instead of an enemy."¹⁹

He realizes that this would be no easy task. Spanish women are hedged about with so many age-long traditions that persistent, tireless effort will be necessary to change things. Further, emancipation will not destroy the home, as many claim; rather will it strengthen its solidarity with bonds of sympathy and understanding. The home and the family, as they have existed, are in Baroja's view by no means perfect institutions: "The family, like all human institutions, has been a fountain-head of repression, injustice, and sorrow."²⁰ In particular, Baroja has objected to the so-called "double standard." He fails to see why marital infidelity should be considered a minor sin for a husband and a crime for a wife. Although mutual tolerance and pardon can be the way out of many marital conflicts for the chosen few, divorce should be possible as a logical and sensible procedure.²¹ Birth control, which has encountered strong opposition in Catholic Spain, appears also to Baroja to be an aid to marital felicity.²²

In recent articles he has not shown his previous optimism in regard to the possibilities of advancing the position of women and modifying the traditional family system. He recognizes that modern industrial conditions are automatically changing the nature of family life and indeed, in many respects, are destroying it: "Where this disintegration of the family will end we do not know, nor can we surmise. The system of wholesale divorce, as it is practiced in the United States and in Russia, does not seem very propitious for the creation of strong social organisms. The strange part about

¹⁹ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 98.

²⁰ "La familia y sus víctimas," *Ahora*, March 24, 1935, p. 7.

²¹ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 104.

²² *Juventud, egolatría*, pp. 90-91.

the historical evolution of the family is that it has persisted for thousands of years when it was constituted in a despotic and unjust way; on the other hand, when one tries to give it a logical and just form, it disintegrates."²³

In spite of the desire that Baroja has shown to change the status of women in Spain, he has been very frank in his criticism of certain trends which the feminist movement has taken. He complains that whereas many women have thrown off their old modesty and are living in a freer moral manner, instead of thereby deepening their intellectual and artistic life they are reducing themselves to nothing more than personified sexual desire.²⁴ Again, in *El mundo es así*, he ridicules the Russian women students at Geneva, who, in their efforts to be advanced, affected masculine manners, became insufferably pedantic, and deformed their beauty with their studious, bespectacled appearance.²⁵

In *Paradox, rey*, he mocks the extremes of feminism in the person of Miss Pich, who edits a feminist review and believes that all men are inferior beings and that Shakespeare, Socrates, and King David were really women whose sex has been altered by the vanity of men.²⁶

The eternal question of the relative natural talents of the sexes is discussed in some of Baroja's novels, often to woman's disadvantage; but he claims that the question does not bear on the desirability of a substantial liberation of woman: "I am not bothered by this question, whether woman is man's equal, his inferior, or his superior. . . . On this point, I cling to that beautiful line of Shakespeare: 'neither higher nor lower, so sways she level in her husband's heart'."²⁷

²³ "La familia y sus víctimas," *Ahora*, March 24, 1935, p. 7.

²⁴ *Las horas solitarias*, pp. 324-29.

²⁵ *El mundo es así*, pp. 55-56.

²⁶ *Paradox, rey*, pp. 73-75.

²⁷ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 99.

EDUCATION

The discussion of education and its problems in Spain as it occurs in the works of Baroja almost always takes the form of negative criticism. In both *Juventud, egolatría* and *El árbol de la ciencia* he excoriates from personal experience the type of instruction given in Spanish schools at the end of the nineteenth century. He grants that he has never had much love for studying, but he attributes at least a part of his unfortunate educational experience to a deplorable system of instruction.²⁸ Especially bad was his university medical training. The professors were without exception inferior; apparently they did not care whether the pupils learned anything or not; they could arouse no liking for their subjects, nor did they attempt to understand their students intimately. He continues: "The Spaniard does not know how to teach yet; he is too fanatical, too vague, and almost always too clownish. The teachers have no other end in view than to get their salary and then get a bonus for spending in the summer vacation."²⁹

When Hurtado goes to the Medical School at Madrid, he encounters a very dismal scene in his classes. The spirit of the students in general is rakish, frivolous, insincere. In class they smoke, read novels, play jokes, shout, and deride the professor. The professors themselves are no better; old and without enthusiasm, they reflect the uselessness and falsity of their environment. The professor of chemistry, for example, was "a poor, presumptuous fellow . . . who had acquired the gestures and affected poses of a silly Frenchman."³⁰ They had an imperfect knowledge of their subject, and could command no respect from their students. Such education as he

²⁸ *Juventud, egolatría*, p. 205.

²⁹ *El árbol de la ciencia*, p. 171.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

has, says Baroja, he has acquired for himself and not as a result of his academic training.³¹

In *Paradox, rey*, when Paradox and his friends are establishing their state among the Mandingos, Paradox, in his extravagant fashion, proposes that schools be established without professors, who are only "a kind of parrot." All the ordinary academic studies—Latin, rhetoric, history, logic, ethics, etc.—would be rejected and a program of free interests would be substituted.³² In a more serious vein, Baroja declares: ". . . to create a free University which would have little to do with the state and its Doctor factories would be a great advance."³³

As one might surmise in view of his general attitude toward the Church, Baroja wastes no love on Catholic schools in Spain. He says that the priests are responsible for the lack of adequate educational facilities and for illiteracy: ". . . the priest convinces them that truth lies in praying and not in reading."³⁴ Particularly he criticizes the convent schools, claiming that they instill a hypocritical attitude through their casuistical methods.³⁵ When María, the heroine of the novel *La dama errante*, is in London, her father puts her in a Catholic boarding school, which is like a prison, melancholy and dull. In *La sensualidad pervertida*, Luis becomes acquainted with several young ladies educated in the convent schools; they know nothing of science, history, or art, and display the most supine credulity.³⁶

A suggestion of Baroja's conception of good education may

³¹ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 202.

³² *Paradox, rey*, pp. 235-36.

³³ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 120.

³⁴ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 277.

³⁵ *La dama errante*, pp. 16-17.

³⁶ *La sensualidad pervertida*, pp. 246-47.

be seen in his comments on English schools. In them, he says, the teacher is not the enemy of the pupil, as in Spain, but his collaborator. One learns to be strong, physically and mentally. The school is a sort of miniature training school for the struggle for existence. But still he cannot stomach the ridiculous respect for social hierarchy and authority evident in the English school.³⁷

The only truly positive exposition of educational theory in Baroja's works is found in Venancio's efforts to bring up his daughters in a natural, somewhat Rousseauian fashion: ". . . he wanted to develop the personalities of the girls and find a way of harmonizing them with their environment."³⁸ Perhaps the ideal method of education for Baroja would be similar to that suggested by Paradox: "We would establish a few workshops, where both men and boys would be admitted. Let them see what is being done; if they have a vocation, they will stay and want to learn; if not, they will get out."³⁹

With regard to the spread of universal education, which is an outstanding tenet of democratic liberalism, Baroja says comparatively little. We have seen his objections to the current standardization and automatization of education under democratic regimes: ". . . in a system of wholesale education the man of talent has no more opportunity to surpass than he had two hundred years ago, perhaps less; the desire for money brings to the schools and universities a mob which obstructs all the roads and stifles even the most energetic with the mass weight of their personalities."⁴⁰

He is frankly pessimistic about the possibility of vulgar-

³⁷ *La feria de los discretos*, pp. 38-39.

³⁸ *La dama errante*, p. 43.

³⁹ *Paradox, rey*, p. 233.

⁴⁰ *El tablado de Arlequín*, p. 47.

izing culture to any great extent. Science, morality, and art must always be the property of a minority.⁴¹

AGRICULTURE

We have already discussed the preponderant importance that agrarian reform plays in the Spanish economic scene and the central place that it occupies in any Spanish liberal program. Almost every liberal movement in Spain for over a century has attempted to remedy the grievous conditions existing in the nation's agriculture. Although none of Baroja's novels are directly concerned with peasant life and its problems in Spain, most of them relating to cosmopolitan and city conditions, he does not fail to recognize the import of the agricultural situation in his native land.

In *La dama errante*, as María Aracil and her father flee from Madrid, they encounter a thoughtful country *hidalgo* who explains in detail the sad condition of Spanish agriculture. According to his commentary: "Here the landowners fence off for themselves fields and mountains, close roads, and yet do nothing for the people. Vast regions, pasture lands on which thousands of people could support themselves, are left uncultivated. The landlords keep them for hunting and cattle grazing. And if they would only do something after they have appropriated the fruit of everyone's labor! But they do nothing. Here is this part of La Vera, naturally fertile and healthful; and yet people die from the fever like fleas."⁴²

The owners have no sense of duty toward the countryside; they take no interest in sanitation or reforestation. They ally themselves with the state and the Civil Guard to repress the peasants. The only rights that appeal to them are the rights of private property, which they preserve with vicious brutality.

⁴¹ *Las horas solitarias*, pp. 289-90.

⁴² *La dama errante*, p. 197.

Most of the large holdings formerly belonged to the Church, and were expropriated at various times during the nineteenth century by the Liberal governments. Instead of being given to the villages, which would have been the just and liberal procedure, they fell into the hands of the rich, who are much more despotic and less helpful toward the peasants than the Church ever was. The result among many of the peasants has been the emigration of the strong, leaving their less capable brethren to deal with a thorny situation.

The same thread of thought is resumed in one of Fermín's discussions in *Los visionarios*. Peasants all over Spain, in the rich districts as well as in the poor, are in a miserable state. "Money and, what is more important perhaps, intelligence accumulate inevitably, under the capitalist regime, in the big cities, leaving the villages bereft of material, intellectual, and moral resources."⁴³ The farm laborers work fourteen and fifteen hours daily, while the absentee landlord is leading a gay life in Madrid. The owners of the land should be obliged to live on their property and contribute to the construction of a decent material and intellectual life of the rural regions, even at the cost of diminishing the brilliancy of metropolitan life. "Rural life must be made civilized and human. If a modern state is unable to do this, it may be considered a failure."⁴⁴ Fermín goes so far as to suggest that the present system of land ownership should be radically changed. Farm laborers and the villagers should be urged to present plans for the expropriation of property and for the planned reconstruction of rural social life: "All revolutions agree in making radical changes in the system of land tenure; a revolution without such a change is not a revolution. If we are to consider that the present system is immutable and permit it to exist indefinitely, nothing will be solved."⁴⁵

⁴³ *Los visionarios*, p. 125.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

It will be recalled that in the few constructive ideas which Baroja has advanced, those of César, those of Roberto Hastings, and those mentioned in regard to the Scandinavian countries, the abolition of latifundia and the ownership of the land by the peasants are constant.

Reforestation, which is one of the pressing needs in Spanish agricultural life, is advocated by Baroja, although in a recent novel he seems to cast doubt on the ultimate efficacy of planting trees to control the water supply.⁴⁶

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The consideration of Baroja's social and political ideas has indicated that one of the most patent attributes of his comments is their sharpness and violence. He is a thinker of few sympathies and strong antipathies. Among his aversions the Catholic Church is the most evident. There is scarcely a novel which does not include bitter or satirical remarks about Catholicism and its adherents. He is as fervent and passionate in his crusade against the Church as is any believer in its defense. It will not be necessary to be exhaustive in a survey of his views. They repeat the stock rationalist objections to the Church from Voltaire to Lenin, and a general outline will suggest the particulars.

His primary objections, of course, are rooted in his general *Weltanschauung*. He claims to be an agnostic and a materialist: "We do not know . . . we shall never know. This agnostic position is the most decent that a person can take . . . the atom, the unity of the soul and of consciousness, the certainty of knowledge, all is suspect these days."⁴⁷ His materialism is not so much a dogma or a philosophic system as a manner of thought; "it is a scientific method which accepts

⁴⁶ *La dama errante*, p. 65; and *Los visionarios*, p. 139.

⁴⁷ *Juventud, egolatría*, p. 27.

neither fancy nor caprice."⁴⁸ His agnostic attitude naturally makes him an enemy of the Church as a repository of absolute truth: "On one side stand, and will always stand, those who believe that the Church is the truth and that truth should be backed by force; on the other are those of us who believe that truth is almost inaccessible, and that even though it were accessible it need never be backed by force."⁴⁹

Following a nineteenth-century tradition, exemplified in Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley, Baroja states that science has undermined the foundations of religion. Even in rural Spain, where Catholicism is so strong, he contends that half the believers would desert the Church if scientific theories were popularized among them.⁵⁰ Science is clear, confident, constructive; religion is mysterious and obscure.⁵¹

Nearly all the basic doctrines of Catholic Christianity receive their share of abuse in Baroja's works. That God should have created the world by verbal fiat is a belief, in his eyes, worthy only of savages and Catholics.⁵² While Ossorio in *Camino de perfección* feels a certain fascination in the sensual beauty of religion, he is repelled by the conception of Heaven and Hell: ". . . he used to laugh at the sulphurous lakes and the cauldrons of tar as much as he scoffed at the golden seats of paradise."⁵³ Fear and reverence for God are emotions which Baroja professes never to have felt, and, echoing Nietzsche, he considers the fear of the Christian for his God a sign of slavery.⁵⁴ He also follows the German philosopher in his

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁹ *Divagaciones apasionadas*, p. 181.

⁵⁰ *Las horas solitarias*, pp. 274-75.

⁵¹ *César o nada*, pp. 180-81.

⁵² *Las horas solitarias*, p. 207.

⁵³ *Camino de perfección*, p. 132.

⁵⁴ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 351.

detestation of the doctrine of original sin. Such a dogma cannot be in harmony with scientific thinking, which envisages an evolution of man from an anthropoid to his present status, rather than a retrogression from a primitive state of purity to one of inherent evil.⁵⁵

In regard to many aspects of the ritual of the Catholic Church Baroja displays not only disapproval but also considerable irreverence. Confession, especially as practiced among devout Spanish women, is in his eyes nothing but "mystic rice powder." Holy communion is farcical nonsense. The custom of offering prayers for the salvation of the dead is irreverently burlesqued in *Silvestre Paradox* when one of the characters suggests that a commercial enterprise take over the task, utilizing phonograph recordings of the Pater Noster. In several novels the Holy Week processions are referred to as repugnant and horrible, indicative of an unhealthy, morbid social life. Many of the familiar practices of Spanish Catholicism, such as the adoration of exceedingly realistic Christs, or the petitions to saints for rich sweethearts, give occasion for bits of sardonic humor on Baroja's part.⁵⁶

A part of Baroja's rancor against Catholicism is linked with his ubiquitous prejudice against the Jews. The Semites, he says, were the real inventors of religion; they are a visionary, unbalanced, feverish people, and their cult consists of "outlandish fantasies of semi-human monkeys."⁵⁷ "Catholicism is like a plate of Jewish meat with Roman sauce."⁵⁸ Nor does Protestantism fare any better at his hands; it is even more Jewish than Catholicism, and consequently hateful.⁵⁹ At the

⁵⁵ *Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, pp. 62-63.

⁵⁶ *Camino de perfección*, pp. 10 and 206; *La sensualidad pervertida*, p. 83; *La caverna del humorismo*, p. 41.

⁵⁷ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, pp. 175-77.

⁵⁸ *César o nada*, p. 105.

⁵⁹ *El gran torbellino del mundo*, p. 202.

time when it was an active antagonist of "Catholic tyranny" and a defender of liberty of thought it served a purpose; now it is nothing.⁶⁰

Another phase of religion which provokes his ire is its morality, both theoretical and practical. The idea of innate sin appears to him an incentive to vice: "Sin is like the husk of pleasure; it is the black mask which veils the face of vice and promises greater voluptuous pleasure; in the last analysis it serves to excite our desires."⁶¹ It makes vice seem only more attractive. Vice is really ridiculous to a clear-minded person, and had the Church not put an aura about it everyone would simply scoff at it.⁶² In *La sensualidad pervertida*, he presents a man, Joshé Mari, who leads a free, vicious life and who is notwithstanding a firm Catholic. He justifies his actions on the grounds that the Church teaches that man is naturally sinful and that the flesh is weak. Therefore he feels that the natural procedure is to sin, repent, and be absolved.⁶³

Especially in the realm of sex Baroja insists that the Christian idea of sin has led to prostitution and all its horrors. Eroticism and exaggerated sexual appetites he believes should be considered not as moral sins but rather as abnormalities to be treated scientifically.⁶⁴

The unpardonable defect in Catholic morality, according to Baroja, is hypocrisy and insincerity, and he often accuses believers of those faults, as he does his other ideological enemies. He attacks the hypocritical tendency of Catholicism in the Basque provinces when they can harmonize devotion and a mania for sport, *novenas* and lipstick, evening prayers and

⁶⁰ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, pp. 203-4.

⁶¹ *La dama errante*, p. 20.

⁶² *Las horas solitarias*, p. 384.

⁶³ *La sensualidad pervertida*, pp. 218-19.

⁶⁴ *Las horas solitarias*, pp. 317-18.

the Charleston.⁶⁵ Concrete examples of religious hypocrisy abound in the novels. In *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, the clergy and wealthy religious people secretly support two bawds and their houses of ill fame, while openly they denounce them piously.⁶⁶ Manuel, the picaresque protagonist of *Mala hierba*, seeks shelter in the church, but is sent to jail by the sexton. "In God's house, where all are supposed to be equal, it is a crime to enter and rest."⁶⁷ Such cases and many others only add to a long literary tradition of satire of religious hypocrisy and have no very original force to strengthen his case against the Church. In fact Spanish churchmen themselves, from Juan Ruiz to Padre Coloma, have joined in attacking pharisaism in their ranks. However, in summary, religion and morality are entirely unrelated for Baroja: "Neither religion nor a lack of it is the determining factor in spreading benevolence, love, and goodness among people."⁶⁸

Another literary convention, as old as the Middle Ages, habitually followed by Baroja is the unsavory portrayal of the priesthood. He claims that he does not attack the clergy immoderately: "In spite of what some believe concerning me, I am not a fierce anticlerical. If the priests do not bother me, neither do I bother them. . . . I do not think that they are vicious women-chasers. At least they are not in the Basque country. They may be hypocritical, ignorant, clownish, and eager for authority, but are not dissolute. Their defects arise from the dogmas which they defend."⁶⁹

But nevertheless nearly every one of his novels includes at least one clerical character who is as odious as any in the

⁶⁵ *El nocturno del hermano Beltrán*, p. 245.

⁶⁶ *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, p. 132.

⁶⁷ *Mala hierba*, p. 191.

⁶⁸ *Las horas solitarias*, p. 275.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

fabliaux-Voltaire tradition. One of his most comprehensive and typical condemnations is in *Camino de perfección*. Ossorio goes to Toledo vaguely seeking balm for his troubled soul in that center of Spanish traditional Catholicism. But his experiences there are bitterly disillusioning: "From those conversations, Ossorio began to understand clearly that Toledo was not the mystical city he had dreamed of, but a worldly city, without any atmosphere of mysticism at all . . . the priests, the majority of them with their mistresses, dividing their time between the church and the café, playing cards, continually cursing their low salaries; immorality rampant; faith nowhere to be found; and, to pacify God, a few canons singing hoarsely in the choir, while they digested their elaborate meals, served by some good female."⁷⁰

Of the considerable number of priests who are tersely described in the novels, the greater number represent a catalogue of the undesirable attributes. While in Rome, César exclaims: "What types you have here in Rome! Jesuits with an erudite air of intrigue; Carmelites who look like bandits; Dominicans, some with a sensual gleam in their eye, others with a pedantic air. Craftiness, intrigue, brutality, intelligence, mystic stupor."⁷¹

The Catholic nuns are not exempt from Baroja's disdain. Far from being the idealistic and angelical mystics of romantic fancy, they are, says Hurtado, penniless girls "who took the veil as a job so that they could live."⁷² In another novel they are accused of stupidity, lack of education, laziness, and uncleanliness.⁷³

In regard to the Jesuits, Baroja has expressed ideas which sharply differentiate him from the numerous other Spanish

⁷⁰ *Camino de perfección*, p. 125.

⁷¹ *César o nada*, p. 66.

⁷² *El árbol de la ciencia*, p. 76.

⁷³ *Camino de perfección*, p. 144.

anticlericals who have singled out the Company of Jesus as their favorite *bête noir*. Apparently Baroja seldom likes to find himself in agreement with too many people, and his divided opinion of the Jesuits is perhaps a reaction against the concentrated abuse of them so characteristic of the typical anticlerical. He specifically states that most of the propaganda about the intrigues and secret conspiracies of the order, such as *The Wandering Jew* of Eugène Sue, are of little value.⁷⁴

Baroja himself attacks the Jesuits, but from a somewhat special viewpoint, limited by two factors: (1) what attracts his criticism is not the fundamental and historical principles of the order but its personnel in modern times; (2) his point of attack on the modern Jesuits is not their casuistry nor their rumored political cleverness but rather their ignorance and lack of real vitality. He minces no words in his opinion of the modern disciples of Loyola: ". . . they are vain, despicable churchmen, exceedingly ignorant, who pretend to be poets and write detestable verse, and who boast of their learning and yet cannot tell the difference between a microscope and a barometer."⁷⁵ He disagrees with those who believe that the Jesuits are great scientists, remarking that the only science in which the contemporary members of the order are adept is syllogistic wrangling.

He complains especially of their control over Spanish women. In contrast to the regular clergy, they have cultivated a feminine, sensual manner which captivates women and makes them tools of the order. "The Jesuits control women—a thing which is not difficult for them, since they know all about their sexual life."⁷⁶ "In our day, the Jesuits have lost their strong character and have become soft, effeminate, un-

⁷⁴ *Vitrina pintoresca*, p. 58.

⁷⁵ *Aurora roja*, p. 252.

⁷⁶ *Juventud, egolatría*, p. 183.

distinguished."⁷⁷ Even the most renowned of the nineteenth-century Jesuit authors, Padre Luis Coloma, is, according to Baroja, a weak writer whose style is imitated from a second-rate woman author, Fernán Caballero. He believes that the contemporary radicals who have attempted to deal the Jesuits a deathblow are mistaken in their tactics. A really liberal program would leave them alone and let them die a natural death.⁷⁸

These are the words of Baroja in his usual anticlerical role. But there is another aspect to his ideas about the Jesuits. Especially in certain of his recent books, he has emphatically asserted his sincere admiration for the order and its work before the nineteenth century. Their founder, Ignacio de Loyola, was a Basque, as is Baroja, and his modern compatriot does not hesitate to recognize the strength and genius of St. Ignatius; he had the zeal and persistence of a modern anarchist, and was an amazing organizer.⁷⁹ "Loyola was a Don Quijote who realized his dreams. According to Voltaire, if one follows in the footsteps of his exalted cleverness, one will end either on the gallows or on the altars."⁸⁰

He claims that the Church would have died long ago had it not been for the impetus of Loyola's organization. St. Ignatius and St. Javier impressed on the order a strong and heroic spirit. Later the Jesuits developed a tradition of subtlety and mental keenness which resulted in a flourishing and original school of theologians and moralists: Escobar, Soto, Mariana, Suárez, and Molina. "The Jesuits amazed the world with their theories and audacity."⁸¹ Larrañaga, in *El gran torbellino*

⁷⁷ *Vitrina pintoresca*, p. 159.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁷⁹ *César o nada*, pp. 170-71.

⁸⁰ *Vitrina pintoresca*, pp. 53-54.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

del mundo, after reading some of the old Spanish Jesuit authors, found their stoical traits exceedingly praiseworthy. In comparison with the sickly members of the order now, they were men of steel: ". . . they were very intelligent and, in a way, very liberal."⁸² In a recent article we have the curious phenomenon of Baroja vigorously defending the subtle morality forged by the Jesuits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Pascal, attacking the order in his *Provinciales*, based his argument merely on ethical commonplaces: "the Jesuits, on the other hand, were the libertarians of their time, the ones who carried criticism to its logical consequences."⁸³ The aim of the moral code of the Jesuits was to furnish a practical morality for imperfect human beings. Far from being hypocritical, as some say, Baroja considers their ethics to be forthright and sincere. He sees in the old Jesuit authors a pragmatic attitude toward human weakness which is akin to his own, and he consequently gives them credit: "Jesuit moral ideas and the order itself, tended to replace an unrealizable Christian utopia with a realistic and workable pragmatism. Where would this tendency have ended if it could have continued to develop? It is not easy to guess. Probably in a naturalistic and realistic code of ethics."⁸⁴

Furthermore, after the brilliant school of Jesuit casuists in the Golden Age, there came in the eighteenth century a group of Jesuit historians who command Baroja's respect. Among them are Masdeu, Hervás, and Panduro. He asserts that their approach to history was thoroughly rationalistic and antitraditional, and that they sincerely attempted to separate fiction from fact. He sees in them the qualities of sincerity, destructive criticism, and probity which he himself holds so estimable: "In

⁸² *Los amores tardíos*, p. 156.

⁸³ *Vitrina pintoresca*, p. 56.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

none of them is there the least respect for tradition. They opened a way through a virgin forest as well as they could. Their whole attitude was one of free, rationalistic investigation."⁸⁵

How much of this defense of the Jesuits in history is only a reaction against a commonplace and how much is an indication of a real change of heart on Baroja's part toward the Church are questions difficult or impossible to answer at present. In the works from which I have quoted and in others of recent date, the virulence of Baroja's scorn for the clergy as a whole and their Church is noticeably tempered. Apparently he feels that this older brand of radicalism is somewhat out of date.⁸⁶ The vitriolic hatred of the earlier novels is absent from such passages as this: "I believe that religion is one interpretation of nature and the attendant plan of life. I do not think that it makes one honorable, nor does it dishonor its devotees. Sometimes religion seems to be on a high plane, at others on a very low plane."⁸⁷

Larrañaga, who says the preceding phrases, further insists that he is not a hater of the clergy: "If the Spanish priest is fanatical and authoritarian, it is because the Spaniards in general are so." The priest to whom he is speaking is attempting to console Larrañaga's *Weltschmerz*, and, although he fails, Larrañaga grants that his intentions are kind and human.

While there can be little doubt that Baroja's net opinion of the Spanish clergy is unfavorable, it is just to remark that occasionally he includes in his novels a clerical character who is likable and even admirable. Probably his artistic sense rebels against a monotonous procession of evil, odious priests. *César o nada*, in which there are so many of the latter type, also in-

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

⁸⁶ *Los visionarios*, p. 202.

⁸⁷ *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 173.

cludes some very fine Church dignitaries: Cardinal Spada, whom César meets in Rome, is frank, intelligent, and amiable. Another acquaintance of César, the Abbé Tardieu, besides being clever and astute, is jovial and speaks to César with a lively, friendly air.⁸⁸ Later, in Spain, the protagonist encounters a priest who has spent his personal fortune in beautifying his church. Although somewhat childish, he is pictured as pleasant and generous.⁸⁹ In *La dama errante*, a priest, jolly and a bit waggish, joins others in condemning the rich land proprietors: "Yes, this state of things cannot endure. I am with you and with the peasants. I am a son of a peasant, and it's only too true that Spain is not a fit place to live in."⁹⁰ Thus Baroja takes cognizance of the social consciousness of the Church, especially in regard to the agricultural situation.

Whatever his judgment of the doctrines and representatives of the Church may be, a more important point in relation to Baroja's liberalism must, of course, be his view of the position of the Catholic Church relative to the social problems of Spain. Like the typical Spanish anticlerical, he habitually links the Church, the Army, and the wealthy bourgeois State together as the hateful triumvirate, the target of the nineteenth-century radical tradition.⁹¹ When a young theological student reproaches Fermín's antireligious remarks, one of Fermín's friends replies that religion itself is not the evil but its inevitable alliance in Spain with the King and the Civil Guard. The people are made to believe that in order to be truly religious they must support not only the Church but also its temporal allies.⁹²

⁸⁸ *César o nada*, p. 131.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁹⁰ *La dama errante*, pp. 189-90.

⁹¹ *Aurora roja*, p. 184; *La sensualidad pervertida*, p. 7.

⁹² *Los visionarios*, p. 212.

The Church, through its influence with the communicants, becomes one of the staunchest supports of the injustices of the capitalist regime and of the rich. "One must respect the rich man even though he be a usurer, the aristocrat even though he be an idiot, the army officer even though he may be stupid, and the magistrate even though he is always wrong. These are the priest's orders."⁹³

Again one of Baroja's characters says: ". . . you priests are like a branch of the Civil Guard. You approve of everything so long as it favors the strong."⁹⁴

The respect for tradition which is fostered by Catholicism, Baroja says, often stands in the way of progress through scientific evaluation of the bases of our society; not all that is traditional is bad, but the Church's accent on traditionalism excludes the possibility of intelligent selection of the good from the bad.⁹⁵ He adds that the power of the Church in Spain is one of the main causes for the decadent state of the country; its baneful influence is most clearly seen in the rural villages. The peasants live in misery and poverty partly because they support starched Church dignitaries in Spain and in Rome.⁹⁶ While the poor die of hunger, the ceremonies of the Church continue in heedless splendor.⁹⁷ In the Basque provinces, the Carlists and the Jesuits have wrought havoc with the people: "In the rural villages they have driven out the natural kindness of the peasants, they have dried up their imagination and filled them with bad ideas."⁹⁸ The savagery of Labraz, described with an

⁹³ *La sensualidad pervertida*, p. 17.

⁹⁴ *Los amores tardíos*, p. 208.

⁹⁵ *César o nada*, pp. 326-27; *La sensualidad pervertida*, p. 17.

⁹⁶ *César o nada*, p. 201.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁹⁸ *Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, p. 152; see also *Las horas solitarias*, p. 276.

almost morbid naturalism in *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, in bull-fights, intemperate drinking, and brutal dances, is attributed to the influence of the Church.⁹⁹ Above all, Baroja says, the Catholic tradition has stultified thought in Spain and failed to encourage wide and independent reading.¹⁰⁰

In the field of internationalism and world peace Baroja fails to mention the continuous efforts of the present Pope to abolish war and prefers to declare that Catholicism favors war. The priests are always on hand to bless the machine guns.¹⁰¹ According to him, the French, Spanish, and Irish Catholics are the most nationalistic groups in their respective countries.¹⁰²

The perfect society, says one of his characters, must be preceded by a rationalist and materialist education, and would exclude religion, individually and collectively.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁰ *Los visionarios*, pp. 203-4.

¹⁰¹ *Los amores tardíos*, p. 208.

¹⁰² *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, p. 104.

¹⁰³ *Las tragedias grotescas*, p. 230; *César o nada*, p. 12.

CHAPTER SIX

LEÓN AND THE THEORY OF LIBERALISM

A COMPLETE change of literary climate is experienced in turning from the persistently rebellious views of Pío Baroja, phrased in his dry, terse style, to the traditional, aristocratic patterns of Ricardo León. León was born in the sunny Andalusian port of Málaga in 1877. His father was a distinguished army officer, and, as a youth, León was imbued with a patriotic reverence for the warlike grandeur of old Spain. Although he was early addicted to journalistic adventures, he made banking his career, associating himself with the Bank of Spain. His first novel, published in 1908, brought him immediate recognition. Since then his works—novels, poetry, and essays—have appeared in rapid succession. He was elected to the Spanish Academy in 1912, a distinction not accorded Baroja until recently.

Some of the difficulties encountered while pursuing the threads of social thought in the works of Pío Baroja are also met in the case of Ricardo León. Probably to a lesser extent than Baroja's cryptic protagonists, the characters in León's novels express a variety of points of view, and occasionally the reader is puzzled in deciding which one represents the author's own views. In the following pages the opinions on social questions conveyed by the characters have been carefully checked with León's own ideas expressed in his numerous essays. An effort has been made to base no conclusion on the utterances of a single character.

But certainly, in the works of León, one does not find, on the whole, as much inconsistency in thought as in those of Baroja. It will be evident in the discussion of León that he is a thinker who resolutely eschews the display of relativity in

judgment and the hesitancy in making absolute generalizations which is so characteristic of much modern critical thought. Generally his fundamental orientation of thought is clear and unequivocal; his defense of the implications of that orientation is consistent and outspoken. The few internal contradictions which may be apparent in the following discussion are usually due to a natural development of the author's point of view in relation to changing circumstances.

One element peculiar to León, which renders the examination of his social ideology rather difficult, is the nature of his style. To a much greater degree than Baroja, he is a conscious stylist, an artist who occasionally overemphasizes his preoccupation with words and the flavor of phrases. His manner of writing is penetrated with a lyric eloquence, which, at times, urges him to overstatement, verbosity, and a certain amount of verbal pyrotechnics. The result for the student of literary style may be pleasing or disturbing, according to his tastes; but for the student of his social thought this poetic exuberance tends to obscure the logic and continuity of expression. Consequently in my outline of his social opinions, I have been forced, in the citations from his works, to quote in a fragmentary and incomplete fashion, since the complete passages to which I refer are often long and redundant in phraseology.

León's complete works to the present consist of seventeen novels, five volumes of essays and articles, and two volumes of verse. For the purpose of this discussion, I may classify the fiction into two main groups:

1. The novels written from 1908 to 1912, including *Casta de hidalgos*, *Comedia sentimental*, *Alcalá de los Zegries*, *Amor de los amores*, and *Los centauros*. These early novels, although they represent a variety of literary tendencies, are grouped together here because they are comparatively negligible in the study of the author's ideas on liberalism and related questions. Their emphasis is on distinction of style, character portrayal,

local color, and the development of more or less romantic plots. Therefore, although these volumes would loom large in a literary criticism of León, they occupy a minor place in the pages to follow.

2. Ten years elapsed between the publication of *Los centauros* in 1912 and that of *Amor de caridad* in 1922. From the latter date to the present, León's novels have been quite distinct in tone from those of the previous group. Most of them are definitely *romans à thèse*, nearly all of them being concerned with the central theme of modern materialistic culture and its evils. The background is more often cosmopolitan than regional; there is somewhat less attention paid to archaism and nicety in style; the fictional interest, although prominent (much more so than in the novels of Baroja), is subordinate to the author's severe criticism of many aspects of the modern social picture. It is this group of novels that furnishes the bulk of my source material.

The volumes of essays are perhaps the most illuminating part of León's work for the particular purpose of this investigation. *La capa del estudiante* is notable as a collection of León's youthful newspaper articles, containing both literary and social criticism. *La voz de la sangre* is a series of five carefully written essays about the past glories of Spain; they reflect much of the author's personal opinion on modern political and social trends. Very similar is the collection *Los caballeros de la cruz*, which emphasizes again the author's preference for Spain's past grandeur in politics and in literature. His first volume which discusses social philosophy was *La escuela de los sofistas*, the nature of which requires some explanation here.

The book consists of a series of dialogues in the Socratic manner between two amateur philosophers of sunny southern Spain. Their conversations, characterized by a pleasant and vagrant informality, touch upon nearly every subject of vital

interest in the realm of social theory: Nietzsche's pessimism, eugenics, the theory of evolution, science and progress, the future of Spain, personal philosophies, etc. Notwithstanding the rich store of material included in *La escuela de los sofistas*, I have based comparatively little of my discussion on that delightful book. The principal reason is that the author has put so many contradictory points of view in the rambling dialogues that it is almost impossible to distinguish his own. The conversations lead to no conclusions which can fairly represent León, and in many cases seem to be merely agreeable exercises in verbal and mental ingenuity.

The poetry of León has a deep lyricism, and represents for many critics a pre-eminent aspect of his literary production; but, by its nature, it will occupy a relatively minor place in the prosaic examination of social thought which follows.

DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND THE GENERATION OF 1898

Written boldly on the literary escutcheon of Pío Baroja is the device: "Negation and destruction." In this regard, as has been noted, he is following a tendency which stirred almost every one of the authors who belonged to the intangible *Generación del 98*. Ricardo León, while he is chronologically of the same generation as Baroja and received impetus from the fateful significance of the same disaster of 1898, found himself opposed to the literary and social philosophies shared by so many of the new writers at the beginning of the century. In theory, at least, the cardinal point of divergence was the matter of negative and destructive criticism. Fully alive to the contemporary shortcomings of Spain, once such a glorious empire, he felt, as did Menéndez y Pelayo before him, that the solution did not lie in pessimistic negation. Although the postwar critics who campaigned for the regeneration of Spain were motivated by noble and sincere motives, ". . . they knew only how to tear down and curse; the majority of them did not

believe in God, in their country, or even in themselves. The regeneration of a country is not a task for pessimists and skeptics. The man of positive ideas, not the destructive critic, is the leader, the great sculptor of souls and nations."¹

What particularly provoked León's disapproval was the tendency of some members of the Generation of 1898 to blame Spain's fall upon certain historical bases of the national life, such as the Church and the ideal of honor, and to attempt to eradicate them from the Spanish picture. For the proponents of the "Europeanization" of Spain, he has only contempt: they deny their heritage and discard the lessons of tradition and of history. For this reason men like Joaquín Costa were doomed to failure; they had no real conception of the resources of the Spanish people as shown in their epic course through the centuries. "In order to make history it is necessary to know history, to gather the experience of the past, for in it are the roots of the future."² What is needed is not destruction, but faith in and love for the traditional ideals of Spain: "Love for the Fatherland: that is the only remedy for our tribulations."³

The verbosity and the truculent disregard for the past which León imputes to the modern intellectuals are satirized in the person of Polo Artieda in the novel *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*. A radical demagogue, he gives long speeches to the Ateneo, employing phrases which but for their bombast might well have been "lifted" directly from Baroja: "destruction and creation at the same time . . . liquidate the past. . . . the most urgent thing is to sweep away all that is opposed to the new creation."⁴ For Ricardo León, he represents "the most typical example of this new kind of university sophists

¹ *La capa del estudiante*, p. 291.

² *Ibid.*, p. 292.

³ *La voz de la sangre*, p. 198.

⁴ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 11.

bachelors and doctors of revolution," who are thoroughly despicable in their desire to destroy.

According to his own theoretical profession, it is evident, then, that León's attitude toward the value of destructive criticism is the exact opposite of Baroja's. He is definitely at variance with the majority of modern liberal critics of Spain in his emphasis on the restoration of traditional values. But in actual practice, as shown in his novels and essays, he evidences great similarity to the very ones he condemns. His method, like theirs, is intensely critical and satirical. The objects of his attack are different, but Baroja, in all his bitter pages, can scarcely surpass León in the severity and thoroughness of his critical campaigns. The majority of his novels, especially those of recent years, have been tirades directed against some phase of the modern scene which offends him: *Amor de caridad*, against current philosophies of pessimism; *Humos de rey*, against the materialism and frivolity of the younger generation; *El hombre nuevo*, against the spiritual rottenness of modern life; *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, against the shallowness and futility of international politics; *Jauja*, against the materially minded *nouveaux riches*; *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros* and *Roja y gualda*, against the Second Republic and its makers. The latter two are almost entirely composed of the most acid political invective, with no more than a pretense of being novels.

Paradoxically enough, therefore, Ricardo León is as iconoclastic as Baroja in certain ways. While he upholds the traditional, his method is to attempt an implacable destruction of the new. From the standpoint of the critical aspect of liberalism, he is as liberal as Voltaire!

His social criticism is in the same tradition as that of Menéndez y Pelayo and Pereda. Indeed his remarks about Pereda might well be applied to himself: "He was a rebel . . . who supported his convictions against the whole world

if necessary. . . . Does it not indicate courage and holy rebellion to preserve one's character intact in times of social turbulence, when people are afraid to be themselves, to have a faith, whatever it might be, and to proclaim that fact in no uncertain terms?"⁵

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

The great difference, of course, between León and the typical liberal critic is that the latter ordinarily attacks the traditional in the name of the new, while León attacks the new in the name of the traditional. There is no theme more constant in his works than that of condemnation of modern progress as conceived in material terms. In his eyes, the modern intellectual pattern is centered about an emphasis on material values which chokes the spiritual ideals, ideals which to him are most important: "Nations which are too preoccupied with material happiness and progress are not happy. I refer to modern progress in its mechanical, utilitarian, anti-artistic aspects."⁶

His fullest fictional portrayal of the falseness of modern progress is the novel *Jauja*, in which he describes an imaginary town in Spain, but recently built by means of newly discovered mining wealth. It is thoroughly modern and magnificent; laid out in the American fashion, it boasts of splendid avenues, costly and elegant mansions, fine public buildings, a stadium, cabarets, "in a word, all that can appeal to the vanity of an upstart, *nouveau riche* town."⁷ But in spite of its material wealth and modernity it is filled with despicable, unhappy people. The theme of the novel is concerned with demonstrating in illustrative detail how ignoble and corrupt is the spiritual life of the most prominent citizens.

⁵ *La voz de la sangre*, pp. 213-14.

⁶ *Cuentos de antaño y hogaño*, p. 104.

⁷ *Jauja*, p. 16.

Most modern paradises are built about the idea that money is an ultimate goal and economic welfare the solution of all the troubles of the modern world. León believes that back of this practical attitude is the theoretical basis of materialistic philosophy. Modern physics, by reducing the structure of the world to an interplay of atomic forces, seems to set the pace in modern scientific and cultural endeavor. Spiritual values are being replaced by a worship of energy, activity, work. Modern philosophy conceives of the world "as a machine, an instrument of slavery which banishes all hope of repose and all free, creative initiative."⁸

He finds the origin of this malady of modern philosophical trends in the Renaissance. Previous to that time, intellectual endeavor had found through the Catholic tradition a harmonious unity and synthesis in Christianity. But during the Renaissance the destruction of this theological synthesis was initiated. With the rationalistic and pagan impulses of the Renaissance, religious unity was broken and a dry intellectualism began to replace a harmonious theology. This led later to the atheism and deification of Reason in the eighteenth century, with its horrible flowering in the French Revolution.⁹

But the very nature of rationalism provided the grounds for its own dissolution. In the nineteenth century "modern" man, through Kant's destructive criticism and analysis, lost respect for the concept of absolute Reason itself, and became lost in a mire composed of a sort of scientific positivism and pragmatism, both of which discard certainty in pure ideas, faith in absolute values, and belief in a Divine Being.

According to León, these modern philosophies have a powerful practical effect on the way men conduct their personal and social lives: "The monarchs of iron and of gold imposed

⁸ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 109.

⁹ *La voz de la sangre*, pp. 243-49.

their tyranny, the pugnacious men of action, the lords of creation, indifferent to fundamental causes and the world of the spirit, desirous, not of finding the deep meaning of life, but of living at any cost. . . ."¹⁰

If the man of action, imbued with the current ideas of utilitarian morality, is a business man, he will deify money, and disdain all that is not tangible and material; "the world for him will be a monstrous machine for exploitation, to be commandeered by energetic and audacious men."¹¹ If he is a politician, he will be an insincere, unreliable opportunist, spreading corruption either as a greedy plotter of revolution or as a defender of the unjust interests of business; "in any case a godless man without a fatherland and without ideas; he will go down in the annals of this century as one of the saddest of its caricatures."¹²

In summary, the ideals which León finds evil in modern life are: "The destructive criticism of the reason . . . the new dogmatism of science . . . the domination of economic ideals; the burning thirst for pleasures; the emphasis on purely external reality."¹³ To state the matter even more briefly, what he finds lacking in modern progress is the orientation of Catholic philosophy: "Only in the serene temples of Catholic wisdom are reason, feeling, and will harmonized . . . only there do scientific truths and philosophical certainties coincide and find their agreement."¹⁴

It happens that León and Baroja come, in the last analysis, to the same conclusions concerning the so-called progress of our age; but it is important to note that their premises are

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Europa trágica*, p. 453.

¹⁴ *La voz de la sangre*, p. 319.

radically different. Baroja's objections are based on a generally pessimistic outlook on life and on an outraged artistic individualism, while León's criticism rests mainly on religious grounds. Baroja could have little sympathy for León's interpretation; León sees in the very philosophy of pragmatism and action which Baroja professes the cause for the falseness of the contemporary *Zeitgeist*.

As far as that basic consideration of liberalism, the general theory of progress, is concerned, León's ideas are much less specific in their formulation. He recognizes that the purely mechanical progress which he denounces so vigorously is only a facet of the larger connotation of the word "progress," a connotation which concerns the criteria of progressive development in the course of history.

The various attitudes possible toward this question are comprehensively set forth in his novel *El hombre nuevo*. One of the principal characters of the book, Dr. Augusto Valdés, noble and generous, full of faith in science and of love for mankind, represents the finest type of the modern humanitarian rationalist. Through his capable and devoted labors as a doctor in his own hospital and clinic he attempts to practice what he preaches—the salvation and perfection of mankind through the application of science and intelligence. His optimism and his faith in the future are filled with dreams of "the beautiful dawn of a new humanity." Through the progressive incorporation of scientific discoveries into his life, man will eventually and inevitably advance to a beautiful state of happiness: "You will see man in the fullness of his beauty and happiness, in all his strength and nobility, without the shadow of slavery, hunger, and sorrow. . . . You will see how he spreads the wings of his genius, how he discovers and tames the mysterious forces of the world, how he builds cities much more noble and magnificent than the ancient cities."¹⁵

¹⁵ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 33.

As Valdés looks back on the course of history, he sees a consistent progress in which man has emerged from primitive barbarism and passed "from instinct to feeling, from feeling to reason, from religious superstition to metaphysics, and at last to the clear light and order of science."¹⁶ In his blind faith in the inevitability of progress, he predicts not only material advance and happiness, but also a new and purer ethics, based on scientific axioms.

He is a complete, even if somewhat naïvely exaggerated, modern counterpart of the eighteenth-century liberal rationalist.

At the opposite end of the ideological scale is Dr. Albarracín. He likewise is a distinguished surgeon, but a full contrast to Valdés—irritable, argumentative, rebellious, pessimistic, and cynical. But paradoxically, he has, at the same time, sociable and epicurean tendencies.¹⁷ For him progress does not exist. Nature, in a malicious mood, has made of men a herd of "imbeciles, rascals, cretins, envious criminals, and savages," and one can never expect a terrestrial paradise to be realized among such sorry creatures.¹⁸ Human existence is an absurd and miserable affair, beset by disease and sorrow in the nature of things. To dream of a triumph of science, peace, happiness, and well-being in such a madhouse is for him the height of nonsense.

In spite of all our boasted development men are as ignorant as ever concerning the real nature of the universe. All the theories of modern biology and physics are either absurd jargon or are false. We have made no intellectual or moral progress since the time of Aristotle: "To mention progress to him was just like mentioning the family. Progress does not exist! In the twentieth century we know no more than Socrates knew; that is, we do not know anything."¹⁹

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 313-14.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Valdés and Albarracín are both extreme and exaggerated figures which seem to be types of ideology rather than characters drawn with psychological subtlety. A more convincing person from the point of view of character portrayal is Valdés' son, Leonardo. His personality is very different from the robust and optimistic genius of his father. Tormented by philosophical doubts, he lacks the exuberant faith in a mechanical and rationalistic conception of the universe which is expressed by the older doctor. As a youth he had an insatiable intellectual curiosity which led him eventually to distrust the efficacy of reason and to sense the mystery and lack of meaning with which the world of things and the world of the mind baffled the sincere seeker after truth. He vainly sought an explanation and a unity to his life because he was tortured by a spiritual loneliness and a realization of the barrenness of the scientific view of the universe.²⁰

Naturally, this attitude exasperates his father, and in long arguments he attempts to convince his son of the soundness of his own rationalistic outlook, elaborating upon his customary picture of inevitable human progress. From his despair and disillusion, Leonardo answers: "Progress does not exist in nature. Darwinism and evolution are antiques of the nineteenth century which do not fit in with biological realities; here is the terrible error: to dream that this world, which will ever be a vale of tears, if not a den of wild beasts, will sometime be a paradise."²¹

Six thousand years of history belie any idea of inevitable progress. Thus does León sketch what he considers to be the logical attitude of an intelligent, sensitive man who has been nurtured in the modern philosophies.

Which of these three characters speaks for León himself

²⁰ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 110.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-28.

in regard to human progress? Probably not the elder Valdés. While he is an admirable and even lovable character, he is a "visionary," whose ideals and hopes are contradicted by the tragic outcome of the novel. Albarracín, because of his idiosyncrasies and absurd inconsistencies, is almost a comic character, and in his skepticism and irreverence certainly does not represent the thoroughly Christian author. Leonardo Valdés is obviously one of the key characters in the novel, and it is very possible that we find in the solution of his spiritual crisis a clue to León's ideas on progress and perfectibility in civilization. Having sought truth in human science and wisdom and failed, he finally finds joy and spiritual health in God. Christian mysticism brings rest to his troubled spirit. Only then does the phrase "the new man," so often on his father's lips, have meaning for him: ". . . the new man is not something which can be discovered by science, art, reason, social culture, or common progress . . . it is a work of faith, grace, and love." It is vain to seek progress and a utopia on earth, through the paths of materialism. Only through God is human progress in human happiness realized.²²

Numerous passages in other works of León seem to bear out this essentially Catholic conclusion: "Progress, if it exists, is infinite; in the highest perfection imaginable man will wish for more, and the coals of this desire will always burn in his heart. . . . And as long as he dwells in the prisons of this mortal life, he will journey with uncertainty concerning his future, deceiving with false dreams his appetite for eternity."²³

Dreams of human happiness on earth through scientific progress and social reforms are noble; in many cases they have become a sort of a religion; but religion with only an earthly basis can never be more than an illusion: "Human evolution

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 360-61.

²³ *La escuela de los sofistas*, p. 63.

is not a material process, but a high moral process. Matter is overthrown by spirit, force by grace."²⁴

Here again the fundamental dissimilarity between the viewpoints of Baroja and León is evident. Baroja somewhat roughly corresponds to Dr. Albarracín in his pessimistic denial of the possibility of progress. León, while his refutation of the value of human progress unaccompanied by Christian regeneration of the spirit directly contradicts the rationalist's doctrine of progress, nevertheless has a teleological interpretation of life. Through religion man *can* attain a kind of perfection. León does not cast essential doubt on the possibility of perfection among men, even though he rejects the current methods of obtaining it. We have seen that Baroja would consequently classify him in the same general category as the utopian Socialist or doctrinaire Liberal, even though they would indeed make strange companions.

SCIENCE AND PROGRESS

Ricardo León's opinion of science is more or less implicit in his conception of progress, which has just been outlined, but it is of sufficient importance to be investigated in greater detail. When speaking of science and its value to human progress, León generally distinguishes between the concrete discoveries and inventions which science has made possible and the mechanistic *Weltanschauung* which frequently accompanies the scientific attitude.

Although, as I have explained, he abhors much of the modern material advance which has resulted from scientific discovery, he gives due credit to technical progress: ". . . the present age is justly proud of . . . the strange discoveries of experimental science."²⁵ Especially in his earlier writ-

²⁴ *La escuela de los sofistas*, p. 170.

²⁵ *La voz de la sangre*, p. 60.

ings there is evidence of actual enthusiasm for certain scientific achievements, such as the airplane, the submarine, and the automobile: ". . . they have at the same time strength and grace, the gifts of nature and the charm of the human imagination. There is no human artifice . . . which better reflects the highest aspiration of the soul: liberty."²⁶

While he deplores the standardizing and consequently unpoetic aspects of our great modern cities and our ugly railroads, he foresees a time when the automobile and the airplane may decentralize city life and replace ugliness with grace and beauty.²⁷ He even goes so far as to state, without discussion or explanation, that science may do away with war. In another of his earlier books, after lamenting the enslaving influence which machinery and the division of labor have inflicted on the individual, he meditates: "Shall we not attain a social stage in which machines will do the heaviest and most hateful tasks, leaving to men the direction and the beautiful, artistic labor?"²⁸

But in his later volumes these few rays of approval for the social possibilities of experimental science are lacking, and the discussion of science has become a polemic against the materialistic assumptions which are made in the name of science.

In the novel *El hombre nuevo*, Leonardo, after his conversion to the Christian way, sums up the author's views clearly and eloquently: "Nor do I disavow science . . . that would be silly and despicable . . . What I do deny is the right of science to supplant faith, its pretension of invading fields which are foreign to its human and purely relative ends . . . its audacity in promising definitive solutions for problems where reason is powerless."²⁹

²⁶ *Europa trágica*, p. 262.

²⁷ *La capa del estudiante*, p. 123.

²⁸ *La escuela de los sofistas*, p. 42.

²⁹ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 359.

The "definitive solutions" to which he refers are, of course, the common belief among scientists that there is no essential distinction between body and "spirit," that they are both manifestations of energy, and that all phenomena can be eventually explained in terms of energy. With this philosophy of science León disagrees violently. It is useless, he says, to attempt to bridge the gulf between "heaven and earth, feeling and thought, matter and spirit, material energy and grace."³⁰ Physics, endeavoring to conceive of the universe in terms of energy, results only in an abstraction of mathematical space, "where reality disintegrates into numerical symbols, where man becomes a complex of atoms, moved by mechanical forces."³¹ Such a picture is the complete denial of life and sensibility, a poorer metaphysics than the old from which it is attempting to flee. Biology, León claims, is useful, but it gives no answers to the questions which concern mankind most vitally. Studied honestly and without preconceptions, it lends no support to a materialistic conception of life.

Developing in recent novels this conviction of the evils of scientific materialism, he frequently denies that godless science can ever be a factor in building a happier world; rather does it tend to make people put their faith in false gods, in the happiness of the flesh. Instead of clarifying their outlook on life it confuses it and sets them adrift without a rudder.³² Materialistic science, in its efforts to abolish sorrow and suffering, can succeed only in aggravating the moral sorrow which is cured through the spirit alone.³³

In *El hombre nuevo*, Augusto Valdés continues to the end of the novel firm in his certainty of the future paradise of

³⁰ *La escuela de los sofistas*, p. 181.

³¹ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 58.

³² *La voz de la sangre*, p. 261.

³³ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 267.

science. But the author significantly remarks: "In vain was it made evident to him, although he was of the contrary opinion, that reason and science were incapable of answering the disquieting questions concerning the origin and destination of mankind, or of giving to our lives a value and a horizon to our souls" ³⁴

Doubt exists in Baroja's mind concerning the ultimate efficacy of the scientific way of life, but it differs greatly from León's passionate crusade against scientific materialism. Baroja's alternative to the scientific method is the way of illusion and utilitarianism, and in any case he would certainly support science in opposition to religious faith.

DEMOCRACY

León's judgment of democracy also follows a different orientation than Baroja's. In Baroja's thought, Darwin and the theory of the struggle for existence color his opinion of equality and the possibilities of self-government. León himself seems to sum up Baroja's argument in the words of Silverio, a poet of unstable and paradoxical opinions in *Alcalá de los Zegries*: "Liberty is a myth and democracy a paradox. Mother Nature sets for us the first aristocracy. Darwin was nature's chief advocate, the one who sanctioned with the word 'selection' the everlasting knight-errantry of tyranny. The brilliant speeches of our demagogues cannot delay the bankruptcy of democracy." ³⁵

But Alfonso Guzmán, the protagonist, who probably speaks for the author here, ably answers such reasoning. More potent than the natural law of the survival of the fittest and the strongest, is the moral law, the law of love and mutual assistance, which justifies fraternity and democracy among

³⁴ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 34.

³⁵ *Alcalá de los Zegries*, p. 269.

members of the human family.³⁶ León cannot agree with Baroja that democracy is theoretically contrary to the nature of evolution. Nor is he so categorical in his condemnation of the practical workings of democracy in modern parliamentary states. He recognizes their errors and insufficiencies, but also gives credit to their achievements: ". . . we can see that the current theories of democracy and the equality of men have brought, along with the most crude expressions of radical barbarism, a considerable number of generous and protective laws . . . a more and more just conception of duties and rights, the increasing protection of civil rights."³⁷

As in the case of scientific progress, León tries to be fair and just in his estimate of the merits and defects of democracy. Yet one cannot but notice that his concessions to the virtues of the modern democratic spirit are heavily outweighed by his recognition of the evils. He realizes that parliamentary democracies usually are breeding places for political bosses and the worst kind of oligarchies.³⁸

In one of his latest novels, *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, a significant point scored against the Second Republic is that the rabble, in the name of democracy and progress, have overturned the traditional distinction of class, and with it "the eternal values of the spirit." They have set as their ideal, he says, the man of the streets, undisciplined and uncultured.³⁹

Furthermore, in this same novel, he seems to indicate that he has in recent years lost whatever faith he may have had in the soundness of the theory of the people's sovereignty: "You may well laugh, my friend, at these platitudes, older than Methuselah, about the sovereignty of the people . . .

³⁶ *Alcalá de los Zegries*, p. 272; see also *La escuela de los sofistas*, pp. 108-9.

³⁷ *La voz de la sangre*, p. 72.

³⁸ *La capa del estudiante*, pp. 316-17.

³⁹ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, pp. 53 and 83.

the people, the real people never governed. Their vaunted sovereignty is the seal of their doom. Every regime, socialist, communist, and even anarchist in practice, does and always will represent the authority and domination of a few individuals over the masses."⁴⁰

Whatever León's final estimate of modern democracies in theory and in practice may be, it is especially important to remark that they do not represent for him the richest and most significant conception of democracy. Through all his books there runs the conviction that the truest type of democracy was evolved in the Spanish tradition itself; he often states that democracy was a practical reality among the Spaniards long before the abstract formulation of democratic theory by the French *philosophes*: "There is no people on earth more democratic than the Spanish. All the formulas of liberty and equality with which the romantic tigers of the French Revolution pretend to have discovered political truth were known by heart many centuries before among the common people of Aragon and Castile."⁴¹

The original Spanish tradition of democracy to which León refers here is embodied in certain medieval institutions in Spain, notably in the remarkable municipal organization. The municipality, especially in Castile and León, developed great political importance during the period between the eighth and the tenth century, and reached its peak of democratic organization in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries: ". . . the vigor and liberty of the municipal government of Castile was probably unsurpassed anywhere in Western Europe."⁴² The bases of this type of political organization were

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁴¹ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, pp. 160-61.

⁴² R. B. Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), I, 189.

the *fueros*, or charters of privileges, which the King granted to various cities. The granting of such *fueros* was often concomitant with the settling of the land reconquered from the Moors; the intrepid colonists, in return for their daring, were given a large measure of self-government. The basic institution was the *concejo* or general assembly of the free inhabitants of the city or district, in which was vested almost supreme legal authority. It chose the administrative and judicial officers and other officials; it also determined the taxation and general regulations of the city. Late in their flourishing period the free cities demonstrated their independence by the formation of *hermandades*, policing organizations for the protection of their liberties.

León is justly proud of the contribution to democracy made by this local system as developed in the medieval Spanish states: "With a great deal of political instinct and with greater simplicity than the modern theorists, our ancestors founded Spanish society and resolved in practice by means of a well-established *contrat social*, based not on vague abstractions but on a living reality, the perpetual conflict of rights and duties."⁴³

He refers on various occasions to the Spain of those times as "the great republic of kings," and stresses the fact that while the King commanded the respect and loyalty of his subjects it was primarily as their "head magistrate," the incarnation of the idea of justice. Their obligation to him, León says, was pledged only in so far as he acted according to right and justice; and he quotes in this connection the well-known declaration of the *Fuero Juzgo*: "Thou shalt be king if thou doest right, and if thou dost not do right thou shalt not be king."⁴⁴

The novelist's assertions regarding the relation of king and subject are fairly well supported in historical fact. In the *Siete*

⁴³ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, p. 156.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

Partidas, the monarch's prerogatives are stated in emphatic detail, but "there was a distinct understanding that the monarch must not abuse his power; that he must govern according to equity and righteousness."⁴⁵

According to León, the political conditions which prevailed in the Spanish states in the Middle Ages were not merely the results of favorable circumstances but the direct outcome of a sense of right, justice, and liberty innate in the Spanish character. Beneath the legal institutions there was a sentiment and spirit of democracy which took form under the ideals of Christianity. In this way they differed from the political dreams of Montesquieu, which came from the head and not from the heart.⁴⁶

Furthermore, in spite of later changes in actual political conditions, the democratic spirit continued to persist. With the absolutism of the House of Austria, the triumph of which was signalized by the defeat of the *comuneros*, the political democracy of the early centuries came to an end. But the tradition was not dead even under the monarchs of the Siglo de Oro. It lived on in the drama and in the political writings of the Golden Century: León quotes numerous passages from *La estrella de Sevilla*, from Calderón's *El alcalde de Zalamea*, and from several of Lope de Vega's plays to prove the vigor and persistence of the democratic tradition. Again in the works of such classic authors as Quevedo, Saavedra Fajardo, Navarrete, Marcos Salmerón, and others he finds a liberal and democratic accent.⁴⁷

Even to this day the genuinely Spanish spirit of democracy may be found in the Peninsula, especially in rural regions, exemplified in the relations between *hidalgos* and peasants. The nobles protect and assist the peasants in their districts as in

⁴⁵ Merriman, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

⁴⁶ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, pp. 156-57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chapter xi, *passim*.

feudal days.⁴⁸ In *Casta de hidalgos*, León's novel of life in Santillana (his first famous work), the village priest describes social conditions in that remote section of Spain: "Here we are all equal; we are like a great family which shares its joys and sorrows . . . the servant does not envy his master and the master does not disdain to come down to the servant's level. In these corners of the Montaña region there remains something of the pure tradition of sane, real democracy which descends from our Middle Ages."⁴⁹

Several of León's fictional characters are the personifications of the qualities of proud independence and democracy which he praises with such nostalgic fervor. In a short story, *Un castellano viejo*, the peasant, Juan de Ruyales, is a modern example of the independence of spirit which made the medieval municipal government possible. Refusing to yield an inch in a lawsuit with a nobleman, he says: "What would be left to us poor people if our pride were taken away? . . . I understand neither law nor politics, but it's as clear as daylight that we are all born alike."⁵⁰

Pedro Luis, in *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, a distinguished diplomat of noble blood, represents the simple democracy of the old Spanish noble. His forebears, "besides being Christians and Spaniards, were active democrats, friends of the common people, enemies of upstarts and petty tyrants, steeped in that noble tradition of justice which shines with such splendor in the popular legal forms of Spain."⁵¹ He himself, in spite of his wealth and distinguished position, was simple and unaffected; he had no sympathy with caste distinctions or the ridiculous ceremony of high society; ". . . following the pure Spanish

⁴⁸ *La voz de la sangre*, p. 137; *Europa trágica*, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁹ *Casta de hidalgos*, p. 211.

⁵⁰ *Cuentos de antaño y hogaño*, p. 70.

⁵¹ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, p. 23.

tradition of 'Christian anarchism,' he admitted no distinctions between persons, unless they were based on intelligence and the heart."⁵²

By deriving thus his inspiration for a conception of democracy from the traditional liberties of medieval Spain, León is only repeating the arguments of many of the early nineteenth-century Spanish Liberals. In the minds of certain of the fathers of liberalism the new liberties outlined in the Constitution of 1812 amounted in essence to a simple restoration of privileges enjoyed by Spaniards before the imposition of absolutism. A priest, Francisco Martínez Marina, was the leader of this group, and his books (e.g., *La teoría de las Cortes*), filled with diligent research on old Hispanic institutions, did much to implement his case. I have described in Chapter I the course of early liberalism in Spain, and remarked on the dependence of much Liberal thought on French and English precedents. This foreign influence increased in importance as the years passed; but still, in the background, there remained the conviction that modern ideas of democracy had had an ancient paternity in Spain. Rafael Altamira, while recognizing the practical force of such an idea, denies its historical validity; he claims that the early Liberals "were dealing with a mistaken notion, and when they evoked our medieval liberties as a precedent they were really referring to privileges which were quite different from those embodied in modern conceptions of liberty"⁵³

It is probably no mere coincidence that this same worship of the traditional democratic institutions of Spain, so prominent in León's thought, has been used as propaganda by General Franco and his conservative rebels. Decrying liberal democracy as destructive and undisciplined, they have attempted to wed the old Castilian municipal liberties to the Fascist ideal

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵³ *Temas de historia de España* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1929), I, 22.

of the Corporate State. In a radio broadcast from Burgos, Franco said: "The Spanish municipality of historic lineage will be revived with all the vigor necessary for the fulfillment of its mission, both cellular and public Since inorganic suffrage has failed the will of the nation will express itself through those technical and corporative organs which are deeply rooted in the very heart of the nation, and represent in an authentic manner its ideals and needs."⁵⁴

It is characteristic of Ricardo León's intense patriotism and respect for tradition that he should center his discussion of democracy about the past rather than the future. Baroja, on the contrary, disregards to a great extent the past, scorns the present, and admires a very individualistic type of democracy, which exists only in his desire or in the future.

LIBERTY

Like many Spanish authors, León frequently speaks of liberty, generally as a highly desired and much-prized blessing. But the most important question in our description of León's relation to liberalism is not his praise of liberty in the abstract but rather his conception of the meaning of the word "liberty." On this point he is quite emphatic. Certainly there is little doubt about the connotations of the word which he rejects: "When the word 'liberty' is mentioned many immediately think of that awful license assumed by the mob, which is manifested first in shouting and commotion and finally ends in the satisfaction of the beast-like instincts which we all have in us; that might be an ideal for ill-bred street urchins, for stupid and uncultured nations, but never for men who are broad-minded and truly free."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Quoted by M. F. De Laguna, "The Past and the Future in the Real Spain of Today," *English Review*, LXIV (1937), 333.

⁵⁵ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, p. 159.

This type of liberty, the rejection of traditional restraints of religion and morality in favor of the free play of our animal nature, infects the modern scene, and its typical results are useless speed, disgraceful nudism, immodesty among women, neuroses, and a deplorable overemphasis on the external and the physical. Various of his novels portray characters who profess this modern "freedom"; all of them are unsavory or pitiful persons who ultimately come to a bad end. In *Humos de rey*, Juanito Fernández or "Ariel" is one of those who offer a strong contrast to the firm, sterling character of the protagonist, Carlos de Araoz. Juanito is a pale, unsociable, joyless youth who has studied Kant, Bergson, and other foreign philosophers; he has no interest in any particular profession. His passion is the free and untrammelled life, and his conversation is filled with such extravagant statements as: "Madame, I am a free spirit . . . I do not wish to follow a single career, one road alone, but many roads . . . What better vocation is there than that of liberty? . . . I want to live my life, wander untrammelled through the world."⁵⁶ When his family is financially ruined, he deserts them, saying, "Anyway, I am going to cross my Rubicon . . . and live my life with absolute freedom . . . I am sufficient unto myself."⁵⁷ As he takes leave of his grandfather, a defender of the traditional ideals of Spain and an intense patriot, he accuses him of trying to limit his freedom, of choking all independence in the new generation. But in spite of his thirst for liberty outside of Spain he comes back greedily to claim his share of his grandfather's wealth. He is a completely dislikable character on whom León pours all his scorn for the type.

A similar, although less repugnant, individual is Don Juan de Monterrey, in *El hombre nuevo*, an intrepid seeker of thrills,

⁵⁶ *Humos de rey*, pp. 106-7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-39.

novelties, and the "dangerous life." His existence is largely given over to satiating, through aviation and reckless driving, his desire for unrestrained freedom and self-gratification. "In the roar of the motor and the siren, which are the drums and trumpets of the modern hero, we gain freedom."⁵⁸ He respects none of the moral laws, as his treatment of women eloquently demonstrates. "No woman in the world is capable of snatching away my savage freedom."⁵⁹ His illicit relations with Eugenia contribute much to the tragic denouement of the novel, and he, the self-styled "modern" man, is contrasted with the genuine, spiritually new man in the person of Leonardo.

The character of Clara Taylor in *Amor de caridad* further sustains León's condemnation of certain ideas of liberty. Lively, intelligent, and avid for life's experiences, she declares herself a free, emancipated woman and wanders abroad, militantly demonstrating her freedom in scandalous adventures. But her unfettered independence brings her only weariness: "I was not happy In my innermost soul I suffered horrible tedium a cruel disillusionment with everything: liberty, money, life."⁶⁰

It is evident that León's quarrel with current notions of the "liberated" life in individuals and in society is only a part of his general campaign against the materialism of the modern age.

The essence of his positive conception of liberty may be summed up in the word "spiritual." Speaking to Juanito, the elderly Don Carlos de Araoz says: ". . . . you lack the inner liberty necessary to shake off foreign yokes and think for yourself; that is the basis of all freedom."⁶¹ The highest manifestation of real liberty he finds in mystic love. In short,

⁵⁸ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, p. 159.

⁵⁹ *Europa trágica*, p. 91.

⁶⁰ *Amor de caridad*, p. 223.

⁶¹ *Humos de rey*, p. 145.

neither abstract legal liberties as propounded in constitutions nor the material liberty of modern customs are of much validity in León's eminently religious philosophy.

Throughout his recent novel, *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, there are indications of a strong conviction on the author's part that the emphasis on political liberties in active statecraft can lead only to disaster and confusion, and that discipline and centralized control are necessary to social well-being. He imagines that the Spanish Republic has fallen into the hands of the Anarcho-Syndicalists, and that, in accordance with their theories, absolute liberty from the "repressive" institutions of state and society is declared. The result, as he paints it, is truly appalling from any point of view. Misery, hunger, murder, and turmoil are the prevalent conditions. The situation soon becomes impossible, and in place of the old oppressions there grow up new and more despotic ones under the leadership of Communists. The obvious conclusion of the novel is that the anarchistic longing for liberty is impractical and dangerous, that a more or less despotic government is inevitable in these times, and that the only worthy opposition to an undesirable Communist dictatorship is some strong government on the traditional model that can rule with a firm hand.⁶²

It is perhaps pertinent at this point to note several passing references which León has made in regard to the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, under whose rule civil liberties were freely suppressed. The assumption of power by Primo de Rivera fortunately forestalled the fall of the Monarchy, according to León, and his regime, especially in the military successes in Morocco, was a glorious reminiscence of the valor of old Spain.⁶³ The dictatorship represented "a reintegration

⁶² *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, pp. 143-54, *et passim*.

⁶³ *Roja y gualda*, p. 250.

of national life, a signal victory in Morocco, and a no less glorious restoration of order, discipline, and peace; seven years of surcease in the progress of revolution."⁶⁴

There is no subject which we have thus far examined on which Baroja and León contrast as sharply as upon that of liberty. Baroja's emotional theme is liberty, "the more the better." León is apprehensive of mankind without the restraining influences of established institutions and traditions. The contrast will stand out in even stronger relief when we discuss León's ideas on anarchism.

To summarize Ricardo León's opinions about several of the basic problems of liberalism—the idea of progress, the role of science, democracy, and liberty—one may say, in general, that he departs widely from the typical liberal viewpoint. To León, progress is possible not through human achievement but only through the spiritual regeneration offered by religion; science, through its atheistic implications, does more to corrupt mankind than to save it; democracy, except in medieval Christian forms, is to say the least dangerous; and liberty, except as a mystic freedom of the soul, is likely to become license.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LEÓN, POLITICS AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

IN THE preceding chapter we have seen the general outline of León's theory of politics. But, like Baroja, he has been an interested observer of the more concrete aspects of liberalism, and we may follow his reflections concerning politics in action by examining them in connection with essentially the same topics suggested in the study of Baroja.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH LIBERALISM

Before considering León's specific ideas about liberalism in Spanish politics, let us glance at his general attitude toward modern politics. In common with Baroja and many other modern thinkers, León feels that the art of politics has fallen upon evil days, and he seldom misses an opportunity to revile its present state with the strongest abuse: it is the leprosy of history, the cancer on the modern body politic, an art practiced only by the worst ruffians, cutthroats, and rascals.¹ León is careful to state that politics need not necessarily be so base, that it is an art and a science with noble ancestors, including Plato and Aristotle. Traditionalist as usual, he seeks in the Spanish Golden Age for truly admirable representatives of the art of politics, and refers to the Catholic sovereigns and Cardinal Cisneros in the practical field and to Francisco de Vitoria and Quevedo in the theoretical. The essential difference between modern politics and that of the Golden Age is that the latter was, in spirit and in truth, "divine politics." He points to the body of laws governing the Indies, the local political institutions, and the noble principles of political justice embodied in the writings of the theologians as outstanding

¹ *La capa del estudiante*, pp. 298-99.

examples of the high contribution made by the sixteenth century to the theory and practice of political science.²

The finest type of political virtues are to be found in Loyola and Santa Teresa. Modern politics is, if possible, worse in Spain than in other countries, because, says León, the old adventuresome spirit of the Spaniard, which used to find its outlet in the picaresque life, now has become cheapened and devitalized; it is manifested in such wise in politics.³

It is not surprising, in view of such an attitude toward politicians and their art in modern times, that León should treat the Liberal and *Progresista* parties of Spain before 1931 with considerable scorn and severity. His principal objection to Liberal politics, "the weak, effeminate, liberal ideology of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," is their origin in the antireligious French philosophy of the eighteenth century. From a broad point of view, he explains, the whole of Liberal activity during the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century may be considered as one single revolution: "For three centuries now it has been developing; its origins are to be sought in the ideas of the French Encyclopedists in the reign of the good King Charles III and his viceroys, ministers, and functionaries, during which time our politics began to be openly or secretly permeated with the Gallic virus, which was antinational, anti-Catholic, and consequently antimonarchical. It was a revolution the history of which fills the whole nineteenth century, from the *Cortes* of Cádiz and the civil wars in Spain and her colonies until the shipwreck of '98, and it culminated in the twentieth century in the three great national problems: terrorism, separatism, and the Moroccan question"⁴

² *La capa del estudiante*, p. 300.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-318.

⁴ *Roja y gualda*, p. 197.

For León, the historic basis of Spanish liberalism is to be sought in the materialistic Renaissance of the eighteenth century, when the Bourbons turned away from the national culture of the Golden Age and cut their cultural and political patterns on the French model. In several passages he singles out the famous Pablo de Olavide (1725-1802) as typical of the hateful trends of Gallicization during the late eighteenth century.

Olavide, born in Peru, came as a young man to Spain, and soon made himself a prominent figure in literary and political circles. He was the center of a fashionable salon frequented by those who followed in Spain the encyclopedist ideas of Voltaire and Diderot. He translated French drama into Spanish; he drew up a plan for educational reform in Spain which severely limited the teaching of theology and religion in the schools and universities. Under Charles III, he was instrumental in colonizing the depopulated Sierra Morena region with new towns. The Inquisition condemned him for being an intimate of Rousseau and Voltaire; as a consequence, he fled to France, where he was warmed at the hearth of the *philosophes*. In León's eyes, he stands as a summary of the materialistic, secularizing modernism which is the root of most contemporary evils.

Olavide is linked with León's personal experience, although in a very indirect way. In his autobiographical novel, *Roja y gualda*, León tells us that some of the saddest days in his youth were spent in one of the towns in the Sierra Morena which was founded by Olavide. For him it is a symbol of the material wealth and spiritual poverty characteristic of the beginnings of the Liberal movement in Spain.⁵ Without a doubt, it is that city which was the prototype of Jauja, to which I have already referred as a compendium of the abhorrent features of modern urban culture.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

With such an idea of its paternity, it is natural that León's general estimate of nineteenth-century liberalism should be somewhat harsh. It represents, to him, "the negation of all spiritual values and faith, the rupture of all traditional bonds, indifference to standards of right and wrong, and neglect of all the principles and aims of human life in favor of the worship of economic factors."⁶

From his point of view, the severest criticism which he can direct against the political liberalism of the nineteenth century is that it fathered the forces which overthrew the Monarchy in 1931. The origin of all of Spain's modern woes, he says, can be traced back to the last third of the past century. "Today is the child of yesterday, no matter how much he may deny his parentage, and pretend to be hostile and foreign to it."⁷ It was the epoch of those who would forsake Spanish tradition and lock up the tomb of the Cid under seven keys (Costa), of "the loud chattering of the disciples of Krause" (the First Republic) and of Cánovas and Sagasta; "the violent agitators and incendiaries of today and their whole savage mob can trace their lineage directly back to that rotten liberalism of the nineteenth century, apparently so pure and white."⁸ Many modern liberals profess to be deeply antagonistic to the radical extremes which accompanied the coming of the Second Republic, such as the burning of churches and convents; but León declares that the people, the masses, are not principally to blame for the violence of civil war. If the extremes of such revolutionary fury threaten the liberal, bourgeois state (as they do), it has only itself to blame: "Were not the evils which devour the bourgeoisie born of its own womb? Did the people foster the development of positivism, laicism,

⁶ *Roja y gualda*, p. 158.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

Judaism, Freemasonry, paganism, avarice for riches, economic slavery, and the defilement of moral values?"⁹

Such is León's judgment on the culpability of the Liberal parties in regard to the Republic, which he considers so disastrous for the spiritual health of Spain. But there is another and less harsh angle to his consideration of the older Liberals; it is brought out in the novel *Humos de rey*. Here, as admirable foils for the materialistic, money-mad younger generation, León has created the characters of Don Carlos de Araoz and old Berrocal. The former has always been an uncompromising traditionalist of the old school, a lover of God, country, and King. Berrocal, who has been, and who continues to be, his archenemy, is a rabid liberal Republican, who fought valiantly during the last century for the cause of "liberty." At first sight, there exists a great antithesis between the two old gentlemen who live in the passions of the past. But as the reader comes to know them more intimately, and especially when he sees their devotion to ideals contrasted with the cynicism of the younger generation, he realizes the essential similarity of their characters. Regardless of the merits of the cause which he defended, Berrocal, the liberal Republican, is portrayed by León as a thoroughly genuine and honorable idealist: ". . . with all the contradictions and paradoxes typical of the men of his century . . . Berrocal, by reason of his integrity, his convictions, and his lack of selfishness, belonged to the lineage of incorruptible, loyal citizens, so fundamentally similar in their psychology to their opponents."¹⁰

Berrocal laments the trend which political life in Spain has taken. In his day the Liberals fought to recover the old liberties of the Spanish people, lost with the *comuneros*, which represented the real Spanish tradition. But nowadays, the

⁹ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 181.

¹⁰ *Humos de rey*, pp. 233-34.

malcontents are interested only in economics, higher wages, strikes. There is none of the old altruism left among modern radicals. "They want to make of Spain a mere outpost of Russia. There no longer exist Spaniards, patriots, Republicans, self-respect, or common sense. They're all Bolsheviks."¹¹ At the end of the novel, the two old fighters, Don Carlos and Berrocal, are reconciled in a measure through mutual sorrow, and together they mourn the passing of the old days. Says Berrocal: "Like you, Don Carlos, I fought for an ideal; mistaken or not, it was an ideal of sacrifice. Now they no longer do such things."¹²

A similar realization of the abyss between the ideals of the older Liberals and those of their radical successors is put in the mouth of a repentant Liberal of the old school as he surveys, in *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, the wreckage brought about by a radical Spain: ". . . who could have imagined that such generous ideals of liberty and democracy, so close to the old Spanish tradition . . . would degenerate into this savage tyranny which corrupts and brutalizes the people?"¹³

While León obviously disagrees, on the whole, with the basic assumptions of the nineteenth-century Liberal parties and sees the historical and, to him, fatal relations between them and the radical parties of modern times, he also can look with an appreciative artist's eye upon individual nobility of character in some of the old Liberals. He has something in common with Baroja on this point. We have already seen how the Basque's nostalgic eyes revert with admiration to the "giants," Liberal or Conservative, of the nineteenth century.

Significantly different from the sincere and passionate Liberal, such as Berrocal, is another professed Liberal in *Humos*

¹¹ *Humos de rey*, p. 237.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹³ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 173.

de rey, Don Isaac. He is one of the most detestable characters in León's novels. The keynote of his nature is an unscrupulous and mercenary selfishness which influences his every action. As long as he can speak in abstract terms, he prates with bombastic magniloquence about progress, patriotism, and the modern spirit. He claims to be "a man of my century, a militant defender of progress and my country's welfare, a lifelong Liberal." Such professions are pure hypocrisy, for he is as willing to engage in a lucrative contraband trade with Morocco as he is to mouth oaths of allegiance to liberalism. He has no fundamental convictions in politics or religion except those engendered by self-interest.¹⁴ Correlated with León's expressed opinions of liberalism in politics, Don Isaac may well stand as the typical Liberal in the eyes of the Catholic novelist.

REPUBLICANISM AND THE REPUBLIC OF 1931

Of the Republican groups and their efforts to depose the Monarchy before 1931, León has comparatively little to say. What he does say leaves no room for doubt about his opinion. He deplores the fact that the stirring of the national intellectual life after the Spanish-American War remained largely a matter of negative and fruitless literature; he adds that in politics the parties of the Right were weak, while those of the Left (the Republicans) were "the most backward and senile of contemporary parties."¹⁵ He criticizes them in somewhat vague terms for neglecting their duties to the people, for deceiving the people with "circus antics worthy of children," and especially for making a national and even international incident of the Ferrer case. Antonio Maura is almost a perfect hero in León's eyes, and the novelist's brief experience in

¹⁴ *Humos de rey*, pp. 100-102.

¹⁵ *La capa del estudiante*, p. 293.

active politics was gained in the ranks of this famous Conservative statesman. Naturally, then, he resents the fanatical opposition which the Republicans manifested toward Maura after the Ferrer case.¹⁶

Concerning the Republic as a *fait accompli*, León expresses emphatic ideas. His two latest novels, *Roja y gualda* and *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, are largely concerned with the change of regime and its possible consequences. In neither novel is there much pretense of weaving a story with a well-developed plot. *Roja y gualda* is in essence a series of reflections on the part of the protagonist, Félix Lázaro, about the circumstances preceding and attending the advent of the Second Republic in 1931. He is quite obviously an autobiographical character who expresses León's own sentiments. Alfonso de Cepeda, the central figure in *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, likewise speaks for the author. The novel differs from the more recent *Roja y gualda* in that it uses the events of the 1931 revolution only as a point of departure for a prophetic vision of the future harvest that may be reaped in Spain from the seeds of the Second Republic. Properly speaking, the major part of the novel concerns the Republic and its founders only indirectly. León imagines that shortly after the establishment of the new Republican regime the "social revolution" (planned by a united front of Anarcho-Syndicalists and Communists) breaks out in Spain, and triumphs. The bulk of the book concerns the sickening chaos that ensues.

In spite of the fact that the pages of these two novels are replete with references to the Republic, they do not provide a very exhaustive analysis of the author's concrete objections to the Republican system. Their spirit is markedly emotional and even feverish. León's criticism is general and all-inclusive, rather than specific; impassioned and personal rather than objective. Typical of his criticism of the Republic are such

¹⁶ *La capa del estudiante*, p. 295.

passages as these: "The Republic, now as before, is the equivalent of discord and anarchy, the focal point where all the old ills and the new ulcers of the national life have their origin and culture";¹⁷ ". . . this Spanish Republic, the fruit of that monstrous alliance of the old political bosses and the furies of revolution."¹⁸ He calls Republican Spain a parasitical growth which temporarily overshadows the older Spain and owes what life it has to the mother tree.¹⁹

His zealous attack on the Republic is apparently inspired not so much by any theoretical objection to the Republican form of government as by a subjective abhorrence of the type of men who carried out the *coup d'état*. His argument is nearly always, in this case, *ad hominem*. Speaking to a Republican, Lázaro grants the validity of a republic in theory: "The ideal of the republic has been a beautiful one since the days of Plato and Aristotle, and I admire and revere it more than all of you, even though I am a monarchist to the marrow. But I fear that here, because of lack of experience and other reasons, we shall not succeed in realizing it, and that it shall become an ignominious mess, as it did the first time."²⁰

The principal reason why such a "beautiful ideal" cannot be made a reality in Spain is that it is espoused by certain rascals, for whom León can scarcely find adequately damning terms. They comprise shyster lawyers and quack doctors, stupid and self-seeking university professors, unscrupulous professional politicians, hack-writers, and self-styled intellectuals: "The ideal of these rogues . . . is the husks of things, the external aspect, the superficial: religion, but without the people; fatherland, but without tradition. They are spreading

¹⁷ *Roja y gualda*, p. 40.

¹⁸ *Ibíd.*, p. 23.

¹⁹ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, pp. 56-57.

²⁰ *Roja y gualda*, p. 245.

like weeds throughout Spain. Opposed to tradition, they adore its caricatures; they detest the army, but would die for a uniform and military paraphernalia; they hate social distinctions, but love to bestow titles and honors upon each other. . . .²¹

A more individualized picture of the types which were the moving forces in the Republic is given when Félix Lázaro visits the luxurious apartment of Adán Fernández. There he meets members of the Republican Revolutionary Committee, who (according to León) were planning for the change of regime as early as 1923. All together they formed "the strangest stew that Lucifer himself could have compounded."²²

Their patron, the Maecenas of the group, is Adán, the husband of a wealthy foreign princess; he lives in dissipated, Asiatic splendor, and his life is a tangle of financial and political intrigue. Among his guests, plentifully served with whiskey and rich foods, are the leaders of the Republican movement. There are several traitors from the Monarchist camp, ex-ministers, who change, chameleon-like, to suit their self-interest; there are a few "intellectuals" of the Ateneo, sniffing about for sinecures and ambassadorships in the coming Republic. Among the latter, one, an unnamed intellectual, is particularly described: ". . . the one with the mouth of a toad, the flat nose, bulging eyes, and sour appearance is one of the Athenaeum fellows." From the physical description, León is probably referring to Manuel Azaña, later Premier and President of the Republic.²³ Another has the nickname of Mingo Revulgo—"a vulgar hack-writer, spokesman for the mob, low-brow dramatist."²⁴

²¹ *Roja y gualda*, p. 223.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 213.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

Félix Lázaro learns they even have the portfolios for the first Republican ministry divided among themselves. For example, the Minister of War was to be a poor, timid narcissist who had failed in his profession of literature. The Ministry of the Treasury was to go to Lucio Tuera, the fat and oratorical Socialist. Mingo Revulgo would become Minister of Agriculture. Many of the characters briefly sketched as they appear at the Republican gathering seem to be thinly disguised caricatures of actual members of the Provisional Republican government in 1931. It is very possible that Alcalá Zamora is included among the turncoat ex-ministers of the Crown. Lucio Tuera resembles Indalecio Prieto, who is, as a matter of fact, obese and a Socialist; he did take over the Treasury post in 1931. León also refers to a doctor among the conspirators, "the midwife of the Republic, the most famous of that group of doctors which is indispensable to all revolutions."²⁵ The reference is almost certainly to Dr. Gregorio Marañón, who, with Ortega y Gasset, formed a nucleus of intellectuals to support the Republic.

Besides these leaders of the Republican revolution, there are in the motley crowd at Adán's mansion a number of Anarcho-Syndicalists and several professional roughnecks.

Throughout his unflattering description of the Republican group, León emphasizes as the principal shortcomings of the hateful company insincerity and self-seeking. Most of them are Republicans only to satisfy their vanity or greed. Consonant with the extravagant sybaritism which characterized the meeting and the subsequent banquet, the guests dreamed of a Republic based on wealth—a bourgeois, capitalist paradise: "The Spanish revolution, if it aspires to be really revolutionary and national must destroy the last remnants of that religion of poverty and humility and re-establish the cult of the golden calf, the symbol of wealth."²⁶

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

The reference in this quotation to the destruction of religion brings us to the most important point in León's dislike of the Republic. If for no other reason, the new regime would have been unacceptable to León because of its attitude toward the Church. Alfonso de Cepeda is profoundly shocked by the assaults on the convents and the burning of churches and Church schools, events which actually occurred in May 1931. While the Republican government was not the actual agent of such outrages, León insists that to them it lent its tacit consent. The expulsion of the Jesuits, the secularization of schools and of cemeteries, and the complete separation of State and Church under the Republic are, of course, very distressing to Cepeda and to León: "How can one reject and persecute, in the name of liberty, justice, and right, the highest Emancipator, the divine Judge; how can one pretend that such actions are for the interest of the poor and oppressed?"²⁷ It is mainly the question of religion that seems to be at the root of León's animosity toward the Republic. In typical traditionalist style, following the footsteps of Menéndez y Pelayo, he cannot conceive of Spain, his Spain, without automatically linking with it Catholicism and the Monarchy: "Catholicism, fatherland, and monarchy are as inseparable in Spain as laicism, regionalism, and republic."²⁸

Since its establishment, the Republic, under its founders, has done nothing to alter León's first opinion, which was based on religious persecution. His condemnation is sweeping and unequivocal, but it is possible to single out several aspects of the Republic's activities which have irked him particularly. Its initial insincerity has been amply proved, says León, by its failure to fulfill its promises. Vowing to establish a reign of legality and justice, it has brought only terror and repression;

²⁷ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 50.

²⁸ *Roja y gualda*, p. 314.

promising to put politics on a newer and cleaner basis, it has fallen into a morass of the worst and most rotten abuses of the old regime. For once in agreement with Baroja, he asks: ". . . was it worth while to have a revolution for this? Was it labor well spent to undermine a throne fifteen centuries old in order to impose a Republic in a country where it was necessary, since there were so few real Republicans, to bring in a lot of idiots, ne'er-do-wells, and clowns, all the old grafters under different names, the same old dogs allied with the wolves ready to devour our poor flock without a shepherd?"²⁹

After deceiving the poor farmers by pledging them the lands and estates of the wealthy with anarchistic phraseology, the Republicans then had farmers shot down (at Casas Viejas) for believing in the promises.³⁰ This incident has drawn the fire of many less conservative critics than León, including Baroja, and the officers responsible for the massacre at Casas Viejas were tried for their crime. But for the Catholic novelist such an unfortunate occurrence is only an inevitable outcome of the selfish and godless politics of the Republic.

SOCIALISM

It is notable that in León's crusade of invective against the Republicans one of the principal points which he scores against them is their bourgeois character, their support of capitalism, and their glorification of material wealth. Consequently the question naturally arises concerning his attitude toward socialism, the social philosophy which has most definitely set its face against bourgeois capitalism. The examination of his opinions on this matter is rendered difficult by certain apparent inconsistencies in his thought on socialism.

Early in his literary career he expresses admiration and even

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-70.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

enthusiasm for the general aims of prewar socialism. In one of his youthful articles, which attacks the falseness of modern politics, he says: "Feminism and socialism are advancing triumphantly over the walls of the old citadels of privilege and over false parliaments, assaulting the halls of slavery."³¹ Later, in 1916, while visiting Germany as a war correspondent, he came in contact with several of the Social Democrat leaders there; apparently he was greatly impressed by the progress which their party had made since 1890 in Germany, and by their general aims.

Certainly no Socialist could be more generous than León in his definition of socialism: ". . . above all it is social consciousness, collective organization, the adjustment of individual rights to order, justice, and the common welfare."³² He praises the robust social solidarity of the German workers, their discipline and order, and points to their system of social insurance as a remarkable result. At the time of his writing, the German Social Democrats were split on the question of the war; some supported the nation, others were more logical in their socialist principles and refused to have any part in the war. León deplores the situation thus created, but prophesies that the end of the war will see the general triumph of socialism, after an inevitable period of chaos: ". . . is it possible that these systems for the exploitation of men by their fellow men, which in almost the whole world are the basis of political economy, can persist?"³³

But since the war, León (perhaps disillusioned by the course of events) has ceased to glorify socialism. In fact some of his more recent novels include acid rebuttals of Socialist arguments. Realizing the full import of the Marxian philosophy,

³¹ *La capa de estudiante*, p. 269.

³² *Europa trágica*, p. 160.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

which is essentially materialistic, he has rejected it as firmly as he has other manifestations of materialism. In the first place, he feels Marxism denies the value of the individual spirit, the great man, in the determination of the course of history. Culture is not the result of individual genius, say the Marxians, but the product of race and environment. With this idea León cannot agree.³⁴

The Marxian interpretation insists that history is determined by material forces and factors, mainly economic conditions. The actual result, León contends, of the dissemination of a materialistic conception of history is to stir the masses to barbarism and cruel violence.³⁵

Another obvious criticism which he directs at Marxian philosophy is that it is antireligious. It is an attempt to substitute a human providence for a divine providence.³⁶ In the third place, León emphasizes the objection to socialism which is the most platitudinous: that it is a utopian dream, utterly unattainable, even if it were desirable. Those who attempt to return to an idyllic socialistic paradise are only destroying civilization with barbarism.³⁷

How are we to reconcile these two points of view on socialism, the one highly laudatory, the other a condemnation? One probable explanation is the change of opinion natural to an author as he matures and fixes his *Weltanschauung* more firmly. Another is that the German Social Democratic party had certain characteristics which differentiated it from other modern manifestations of socialism. In the first place, it was not dogmatically Marxian in theory. The representative program of the party, as drawn up in Erfurt in 1891, stressed

³⁴ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 197.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-98.

³⁶ *Roja y gualda*, p. 128.

³⁷ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 134.

the idea of achieving socialism through a long historical development. The materialistic conception of history and the Marxian theory of value were not explicitly included in the program.³⁸ Consequently German socialism did not shock León by an emphasis on abrupt change or on materialistic theories. In the second place, the German Social Democrats were never antireligious in their general tendencies. Against the repressive policy of the German government toward the Catholics these Socialists had always defended the rights of the Church to exist freely as a private institution. A German Catholic confessed to León: "As you see, we agree on many things with the Socialists."³⁹ Consequently the greatest objections which León has expressed toward Marxian socialism were largely absent from the prewar socialism of Germany which he so admired.

Obviously, holding such opinions of Marxian theory, León's condemnation of the Spanish Socialists is to be taken for granted, especially since they made common cause with the detestable Republicans. Furthermore, the Socialists, under the Republic, must take the blame for preparing the ground for the more violent Communists and Syndicalists. After listening to the Communists ridicule Rúa and Artieda, Socialist speakers in the Ateneo, Alfonso de Cepeda addresses the latter thus: "You yourselves, the teachers of youth, were the ones who sowed the seed for this harvest. Why are you surprised and angry that your pupils should reap this crop of violence?"⁴⁰

It is also to their discredit that their coalition with the Republicans in 1931 was unable to deal with the rising tide of Bolshevism, which León regards as an imminent menace. So-

³⁸ S. F. Markham, *A History of Socialism* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 88.

³⁹ *Europa trágica*, p. 157.

⁴⁰ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 30.

cialism, by its temporizing policy, weakened the Republic's defense against terrorism.⁴¹

His concluding remarks on socialism echo the dominant religious motif which we have heard so frequently in his work: ". . . true socialism lies not in the theories of the First, Second, or Third International, but in the words of the divine Creator, when he said to the first man: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'."⁴² In the same tone, Leonardo, in *El hombre nuevo*, answers a Socialist's dreams of a socialized future paradise: "Will you be able to do away with evil? No one can suppress sorrow, old age, and death. Can you quench the thirst of souls which yearn for Eternity?"⁴³ It is precisely this religious element which differentiates León's criticism of socialism from that of Baroja. In the last analysis, both disapprove of Marxism and the Socialist party; but Baroja assails them on the basis of their plans for regimentation, their unscientific assumptions, their hypocrisy; León, as a Catholic, singles out, more often than not, the antireligious ideology fundamental to Marxian theory as its most lamentable element.

COMMUNISM

Perhaps the most obvious difference between the ideas of the Socialists and those of the Communists was that the latter emphasized the role of violent revolution in the establishment of their ideals. The ideology of Karl Marx provided the theoretical point of departure for both brands of radicalism; since it is indisputable that León completely rejects that philosophy, we may pass immediately to a consideration of his opinions of revolution and violence in general.

With considerable sympathetic understanding of the hard-

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

⁴² *Roja y gualda*, p. 307.

⁴³ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 210.

ships suffered by the proletariat under the capitalist system, he recognizes clearly the immediate reasons for violent social upheaval. In *El hombre nuevo* he describes in vivid detail a revolutionary general strike in Madrid, engineered largely by Communists and Syndicalists. It was supported with fanatic fervor by the workers for causes which León carefully outlines: the poverty and hunger rampant among them, which seemed to cause no compassion in the corrupt political leaders in the government; the desire for justice; the contagion of war.⁴⁴ Such, in León's eyes, are the conditions that make revolutions possible, and, in another novel, he indicates that some revolutions may be inescapable steps in the development of a people, may even bring some good results. But while the novelist is cognizant of all these factors, his net judgment of revolution is undeniably adverse: "An illness, no matter how inevitable it may be, is something more hateful than glorious."⁴⁵

No matter how noble or how sound the ideals which motivate a revolution may be, he says it is essentially a victory for brutal passion, the temporary triumph of our baser animal natures. León compares revolutionary methods of change to the antiquated, rough-and-ready surgery of centuries past, which slashed heedlessly at the patient, cutting the good with the bad. A more modern social treatment would be that which "provides a substitute for the diseased, useless, and weak parts, by regenerating the tissues and organs."⁴⁶

Once again, on the question of revolution, he summarizes his conclusions in religious terms. Real revolutionaries—and he includes himself among them—recognize that the only revolution which is capable of changing the nature of man and society is the Gospel of Christ. All others are fruitless and insufficient.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 303.

⁴⁵ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 226.

⁴⁶ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 306.

⁴⁷ *Roja y gualda*, pp. 20–21.

No discussion of the novelist's estimate of communism can be meaningful unless his views on the Russian Soviets are examined. León's novel which mentions communism in Russia most frequently is *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, written in 1927. The title refers to the revolutionists and international politicians who really are working for death and destruction. In this novel the author shows that he is fully aware of the conditions which caused the Russian revolution in 1917. In the person of Olga Petropof, a White Russian refugee, we have the incarnate *raison d'être* of the resentment in Russia against the ruling class and system. She is a sensual, pampered, selfish woman, whose only real sorrow for "holy Russia" arises from a homesickness for the luxury and vice of the Czar's court.⁴⁸ Such an aristocracy was maintained only through the misery and slavery of the whipped multitudes. Revolution was natural and inevitable.

In a certain sense the Russian revolution seems to appeal to León's instinct for the dramatic and the heroic; he remarks on the amazing spectacle of "huge multitudes moved by a new Ideal,"⁴⁹ of the Red Army made up of many races and types of people, "all intoxicated with an obscure and paradoxical ideal, an ideal of love, which in the last analysis brings cannons, war, hate, and death."⁵⁰ He recognizes in the rise of Soviet Russia a natural reaction of the Orient against the corruption of Western civilization, a desire to create an independent and a new culture: "I detest the Soviets, but today the world needs the new Russia as an antidote for Western imperialism. The militant East has Moscow for its capital."⁵¹ He even wonders if Russian communism is not destined to

⁴⁸ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, p. 147.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

⁵⁰ *El hombre nuevo*, p. 88.

⁵¹ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, p. 309; cf. p. 357.

defeat the Occidental world and form the basis for its future.⁵²

León finds the Communist regime in Russia hateful, on the whole; but nevertheless he grants the vitality and sincerity of the experiment. While the basic assumptions of the Soviets are entirely unacceptable to him, the Russians at least have a firm purpose in mind, that of forming a new culture, a new art, and a new economics; and they follow it with high determination. In this respect, says León, they are a contrast to most Spanish radicals, who are self-seeking, platitudinous, and negative.⁵³ However, his final judgment of communism in Russia is anything but friendly: "Russian satanism," "Lenin, the apostle of the Antichrist," and "the infernal hosts of the Kremlin." He condemns especially the tyranny of the proletarian dictatorship and its methods. Ivan Azeief, a secret agent of the Soviets in *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, is representative of the cruelty of his government. Farfán addresses him thus: "You are something worse than a man, something more than a beast . . . the terrible instrument of hidden forces, of invisible powers, of irresponsible tyranny, of shady oppression. You personify . . . inquisitions of the State, systems of slavery, reigns of blood, cruelty and terror."⁵⁴

Furthermore, Moscow is the natural enemy of Rome, that is, of the Catholic Church. The consequences, without need of further specific motivation, follow for León: "A Spanish *caballero*, a Christian *caballero*, must be against Satan, and consequently against Moscow."⁵⁵

It should be repeated at this point, however, that it is apparently not capitalism for its own sake which León is

⁵² *El hombre nuevo*, p. 88.

⁵³ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 172.

⁵⁴ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, p. 233.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

defending against communism. It is rather the spiritual, Catholic interpretation of society as against a godless, material one. In fact, León insists on several occasions that communism and capitalism are but different aspects of the same idolatry of material wealth; they are deadly enemies, but are really children of the same father.⁵⁶ In consequence, says León's spokesman in *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, although Rome can have nothing to do with communism, neither can it rightly lend its support to the plutocracy of Western Europe, based on force and hatred and material greed.⁵⁷ This point is especially pertinent to our subject since the current liberal criticism of the Church in Spain (e.g., that of Baroja) is often concerned with the alleged alliance of religion with the wealth and the "vested interests" of the country.

León, likewise, sees no essential difference between fascism and communism. He describes a certain Cesare Ferroni, agent of Mussolini in Paris. Ferroni was an anarchist in his youth, a socialist in his early manhood, and is now an imperialistic fascist. León remarks that all of his political stages are natural manifestations of a certain type of temperament: "Between the dictator of the bourgeoisie and the dictator of the proletariat there are only minor differences. Fascism and Sovietism, if not brothers, are cousins, and sometimes they act like twins."⁵⁸

León, like Baroja, is concerned about the future of Spain in relation to communism. His fullest treatment of the subject is given in *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*. In this novel he does not distinguish especially the forces of the Communists from those of the Anarcho-Syndicalists, although their theory and tactics differ widely. To León they form together the "Red

⁵⁶ *Roja y gualda*, p. 17.

⁵⁷ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, p. 59.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

beast." Therefore in this discussion I shall not consider the Anarcho-Syndicalists apart from their Communist brethren.

As has been pointed out above, León imagines in *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros* that the Communists and the Anarcho-Syndicalists, united under a Pact of Paris, plot and carry out the social revolution in Spain; they capture the power from the bourgeois Republic. The major portion of the book is dedicated to a truly frightful account, seen through the eyes of Alfonso de Cepeda, of the barbarism, chaos, and cruelty which result from the rule of the "Reds." It is in this volume that we see León's indignation in its most unrestrained form. Unrelieved by humor or any spirit of toleration, the author has attempted a forecast of the future, and the consequence is a "Red nightmare." It will be sufficient to outline here a few of the more specific charges which León throws at his radical foes:

1. Criminality: Robbery is carried on under the name of expropriation. Murderers are glorified as public officials.⁵⁹

2. Hypocrisy: The leaders deceive the masses by making glowing promises of liberty and justice, while they actually set up an iron dictatorship of tyranny and force.⁶⁰

3. Graft and corruption: The revolutionary chieftains indulge in the same pillage of public funds and favoritism which characterized the worst of the old regime.⁶¹

4. Disorder and chaos: The radicals fight among themselves, and are incapable of establishing public order. A shifting group of personal dictatorships arises in the provinces; in effect the worst anarchy reigns.⁶²

5. Attacks on religion: Atheism is made obligatory. Paganism begins to replace Christianity.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, pp. 76-77.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

6. Economic ruin of the country: Hunger is widespread; no one works. Factories are idle and crops unharvested.⁶⁴

7. Immorality and the destruction of the family: Free love and abortions are legalized and made common. The State educates children.⁶⁵

These points give only a general idea of the nature of León's attack. They seem sufficient, however, to reveal that his rejection of communism as a solution of Spain's maladies is not only definite and absolute but also highly charged with emotion.

NATIONALISM AND WAR

The contrast between Ricardo León and Pío Baroja is even more evident in their ideas on patriotism than in most other respects. Baroja's works are striking for their almost complete absence of expressed sentiments of patriotism. One does not doubt that he is profoundly interested in the welfare of his country, but never does he formulate this interest in the emotional and laudatory phraseology which characterizes the intense, "professional" patriot. León, on the other hand, habitually speaks of Spain with an almost sacred reverence and an unqualified worship. His frequent eulogies of his *patria* are studded with emotional words which indicate that the author's conception of his country is largely a matter of the heart and not of the mind.

At least two volumes of his works, *Los caballeros de la cruz* and *La voz de la sangre*, are given over in the main to a fervent paean of praise of the traditions, literature, and heroes of Spain. The general tone of the essays is characterized by such subjective statements as this: "Oh, my Spain! Thy history is altogether beautiful, great, and noble; thou art an hon-

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-82.

ored mother, and a fair dame. . . . Never didst thou fight for base motives nor draw thy sword for hidden reasons. . . . Thou didst fight with sovereign dignity for the honor of thy flags . . . and, above all, for the glory and defense of the Faith."⁶⁶

Most of the old *hidalgos* who are so sympathetically portrayed by León and who form a type which runs through nearly all of his novels are characterized principally by their unswerving and belligerent devotion to their country. Don Juan Manuel in *Casta de hidalgos* is a sturdy patriot whose conversation usually was "an ardent apology for his country, a hymn to the race, a eulogy of its history."⁶⁷ Don Pedro Pérez de Guzmán in *Alcalá de los Zegries* held as his ideal his ancestor who killed his own son rather than betray his country and his King.⁶⁸ In *Humos de rey*, not only had Don Carlos de Araoz fought for King and country, but also the old Republican, Berrocal, was a patriot Spaniard even though he was also a rebellious Republican.⁶⁹ Both these fine, stern patriots, each in his own fashion, regard with scorn and sadness the apparent lack of their kind of patriotism in the younger generation. The aspect of the Communist revolution that wounds Alfonso de Cepeda most deeply is the tendency it has to divide Spain, once a glorious empire, into small anarchistic states.⁷⁰

While such an attitude of ardent patriotism does not necessarily imply a rejection of all ideals of internationalism, its corollary in the case of León is the severe criticism of certain brands of internationalism. Specifically he attacks the so-

⁶⁶ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, p. 49.

⁶⁷ *Casta de hidalgos*, p. 131.

⁶⁸ *Alcalá de los Zegries*, p. 33.

⁶⁹ *Humos de rey*, p. 242.

⁷⁰ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, p. 147.

called ideal of world citizenship typical of some modern intellectuals. The unpleasant Ariel in *Humos de rey* incarnates this conception. He lives most of the time outside of Spain, believes that patriotism is an absurd instinct which should be rooted out of Spanish life, and taunts his traditionalist grandfather for his devotion to his country. According to him: "Wherever I am, there is my fatherland . . . the country of the spirit is nowhere and is everywhere."⁷¹ Love of one's native land, he says, is an illusion which conflicts with reason and reality. Such ideas are ably answered by the author, not only through Don Carlos, but also through Mister Lynn, an American, who loves Spain more than Ariel does. As he phrases it, love of country is one of the sacred laws of nature, and to disavow it is to pervert man's prime heritage. The intellectual's ideal of internationalism is a contradiction of his manhood.⁷²

Even more seriously does León object to the various attempts of European statesmen to bring about internationalism in Europe. One of the best known of these attempts, outside of the League of Nations, was the movement for a "United States of Europe," which attracted considerable attention during the years 1923-27. In 1923 Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, an Austrian, published a book, *Pan Europa*, which had a remarkable success. In it he repeated the well-worn jeremiad about the decadence of Europe and suggested a way out. Frightened by the power of Soviet Russia, he outlined a plan for the creation of a United States of Europe, an economic and political union of the twenty-six European states, based on complete free trade between the nations and mutual guaranties of security and disarmament.⁷³ The result of the

⁷¹ *Humos de rey*, p. 100.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁷³ "Can Europe Federate?" (editorial), *The New Republic*, XLVII (1926), 350-52.

book was the organization in many countries of Pan-European societies, and eventually a Pan-European Congress was called in Vienna in October 1926 for the discussion of the plan. Over two thousand delegates, some from every European country, were present, among them many well-known statesmen and economists.⁷⁴

In León's novel *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, the Catholic, traditionalist protagonist, Pedro Luis Farfán, attends this Congress; León, through him, pours forth his vials of wrath upon the somewhat utopian assembly. As he sees it, the Congress was fantastic and theatrical, its histrionic attitude converting concrete problems into fiction and absurdity. Among the speakers he describes a French economist (possibly De Laisi, although León mentions no names) who has "the appearance and mentality of a headwaiter," and a merchant politician who is a hypocritical supporter of the worst types of imperialism and exploitation.⁷⁵ The criticism of the fundamental theories motivating the Congress is set forth in the speech with which Farfán amazes and shocks the assembly: the idea of a United States of Europe is itself a comic utopia, a new kind of Esperanto, which completely disregards history and human nature. The essence of the plan is to imitate the dollar imperialism of the United States of America and to set up an economic union to enslave the rest of the world. In the end, he says, such movements must fall, since they are based on the worship of the golden calf, and neglect the spiritual regeneration which is the only key to the solution of Europe's decadence.⁷⁶

León is no less critical of the League of Nations. In the same speech, Farfán declares that the League is based on the

⁷⁴ H. D. Gideonse, "First Congress for a United States of Europe," *Current History*, XXV (1926), 365-78.

⁷⁵ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, pp. 376-78.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 383-84.

sins of the Versailles Treaty. In a spirit of revenge and hatred the beginnings of the League are associated with the injustice done to Germany.⁷⁷

Along with this rhetorical tirade against efforts toward international *rapprochement*, León also explains his own positive conception of internationalism. It is, as one might expect, a thoroughly Catholic conception. The decadence of Europe is due directly to the disregard of the Gospel of Christ by Western culture; the only solution is to return to it. Instead of the motto "Europe for the Europeans," he suggests "Europe and America and the whole world for humanity," a motto which he considers typically Spanish.⁷⁸

At this point, we may see more clearly how León relates his patriotism and his Catholic internationalism. Nationalism in France and in other countries, he says, may be incompatible with a love for humanity in general. But Spanish patriotism is an "expansive feeling . . . universal and Christian, which includes a duty and a mission toward all mankind, a love in Christ for all peoples and races."⁷⁹ Spain, he insists, has always set an example of international brotherhood, and her mission of preserving and propagating the Christian ideal among nations is still peculiarly hers.

In summary we may say that while León expresses in somewhat vague and poetic terms a love for humanity his reaction in concrete cases seems always to be toward a firm nationalism and against contemporary efforts in the direction of international organization.

It is not easy to describe explicitly Ricardo León's definitive ideas on the question of militarism versus pacificism. In some cases they are so bound up with sentimental associations that

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

there is little rational discussion of the matter in his novels. There is noticeable in all his works—novels and essays—a tendency to glorify martial exploits and military glory, which possibly goes back to his childhood. León, as a youth, was attracted to the military life, which he glorified with his strong imagination. His great ambition was to imitate his father and become a renowned military genius. Circumstances prevented the realization of his ambition, but numerous references to the army and its glories in his novels indicate that he has not lost his enthusiasm for the military spirit. Berrocal says: "Ever since childhood I have longed for a gun and looked forward to the day when I would be old enough to go to war. I am a patriot."⁸⁰

In the same novel Don Carlos had been a militant patriot in his younger days and had gloried in it. Pedro Pérez de Guzmán in *Alcalá de los Zegries*, in whom the author personifies the fine virtues of ancient Spain, had been a soldier and his military qualities complement naturally his noble and chivalric virtues.⁸¹ The mystic, Fernando Villalaz, in *Amor de los amores*, had in his youth been a soldier, glorying equally in wielding the pen and the sword.⁸² Probably in an autobiographical vein, the author glorifies the father of Félix Lázaro in *Roja y gualda* as a soldier and patriot and counts among his greatest natural qualities a military spirit.⁸³ Many of his essays in *Los caballeros de la cruz* are hymns to the past military glories of Spain: ". . . in Spain militant we see the heroic tradition, the active and enterprising spirit, the love of the dangerous life, spring into renewed vigor."⁸⁴ He fully justifies

⁸⁰ *Humos de rey*, p. 243.

⁸¹ *Alcalá de los Zegries*, p. 34.

⁸² *Amor de los amores*, p. 21.

⁸³ *Roja y gualda*, p. 38.

⁸⁴ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, p. 47.

Spain's wars in Europe and America because they were fought for the sake of national honor and in defense or propagation of the Faith.

These expressions, however, do not mean that León considers wars in modern times to be desirable. His net judgment of the World War is that it was one more manifestation of the soulless, materialistic culture common to Western European nations; he believes that the economic competition and characteristic brutality of our current utilitarian philosophy were at the root of the struggle. He blames French and German militarism equally for the debacle.⁸⁵

It seems probable that León's theoretical attitude toward war is dictated by sentimental currents which are not concerned directly with the absolute goodness or badness of warfare. If the war is one waged by sixteenth-century Spain, it is a war of the Faith and justifiable; if it is a modern war, it is a hateful function of a materialistic civilization. His ideas here are a contrast to the clear-cut antimilitarism of Baroja.

He does agree, however, in essence with Baroja's adverse criticism of modern imperialism, especially as exemplified by Great Britain. In *Los trabajadores de la muerte* he includes an allegorical dialogue between Próspero and Caliban, representing respectively England and Japan. This dialogue shows how Japan plans to challenge England's imperialistic supremacy by adopting her methods. But Caliban ridicules the false rationalization offered by England that imperialism spreads culture and civilization to barbarous peoples: ". . . behind your campaigns for justice, liberty, and civilization there is nothing but the land-hunger of the barbarian hordes. Your name for plunder is a protectorate, for the extermination of races colonization, for slavery autonomy; . . . in the name of a culture which is not yours you bear to all parts of the world hatred,

⁸⁵ *Europa trágica*, pp. 25 and 423.

violence, the worship of money, deceit, and the poison of opium and alcohol."⁸⁶

Baroja in his most sarcastic attack on imperialism can scarcely equal this condemnation.

FEMINISM AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN

Still another question on which Baroja and León find themselves in substantial agreement concerns the liberation of women from their position of political and social inferiority. In a collection of articles representing León's early journalistic work, there is one which is as ardent an endorsement of feminism as can be imagined. Curiously enough, the basis of his defense of such a relatively modern movement is soundly traditional. In the first place, the Spanish woman of history, according to his interpretation, was by temperament independent; she was interested in public affairs. He points to outstanding women in Spanish public life: Isabel la Unica, María la Brava, the intensely practical Santa Teresa, and many others.⁸⁷ This motif is continued in other essays of León. Contrary to the popular conception, the Spanish woman was never in the position of the Oriental concubine, nor was she a household slave, but a free agent.⁸⁸ In support of his statement he refers to the Spanish custom of retaining the wife's maiden name in the family name and to the fact that women had the right to vote in the older *Cortes*. He further notes that types of the vigorous, independent Spanish woman occur frequently in the literature of the Siglo de Oro.

Moreover, Christianity postulates a liberated woman: "Before God the soul has no sex, and Ignacio de Loyola and Santa Teresa have equally glorious crowns. We should be so em-

⁸⁶ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, pp. 119-20.

⁸⁷ *La capa de estudiante*, pp. 271-72.

⁸⁸ *Los caballeros de la cruz*, p. 184.

phatic on this point that we should even assert—and it would not be a paradox—that more rights belong to women than to men, for the very reason that as wives and mothers they have higher duties and more delicate responsibilities.”⁸⁹

In his youthful essay, he confidently brushes aside the stock objections to granting political equality to women. Some say that woman’s sole mission is in the home. But her moral obligations to humanity are more important than darning socks and making stew. Another commonplace objection is that women are weaker and less capable than men. León roundly denies this. If there is a contrast to be made, it is that women surpass men, having more moral stamina and perseverance.⁹⁰

Like Baroja, León grants that woman’s status has been pitiful. She has been the victim of unjust laws that have been a means of enslaving her. Often she has been treated as a servant and left without adequate education. Men have treated women in such a manner that many times they have not even been fit for motherhood.⁹¹ It must be remembered that León is referring here to conditions in the early part of the twentieth century as he interpreted them. The only solution, said the novelist as a young man, was the political and social emancipation of women: “. . . it is a natural consequence of the democratic ideas of the century, a change which is demanded in human evolution.”⁹²

However, as León grew older in years and in experience his enthusiasm for feminism seems to have waned, and his references to it are more and more wary and critical. One of the aspects of German life which impressed him during his journeys as a war correspondent was the freedom which women had achieved in Germany. He admires it to a certain extent, especially in that it had made the women brave and self-reliant

⁸⁹ *La capa de estudiante*, p. 272.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 273–75.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 287.

in the face of the hardships of wartime, and he states that he still believes that "feminine emancipation is a duty of our age and will produce in the long run a nobler and a better society."⁹³ But he confesses that some phases of the new spirit are profoundly repugnant to him. He joins those who repeat commonplaces and whom he had previously mocked when he regrets the loss of mystery, grace, and feminine sensitivity which seems to accompany freedom for women. Chivalric love becomes sensuality; sexual relations become a mere physical fact; and the result often is the actual debasement of womankind: "Let us free her, yes. But in the Christian, Spanish fashion, without dragging her from her pedestal or snatching away her spiritual crown."⁹⁴

He returns to the same theme in the novel *Los trabajadores de la muerte*. Here we are introduced to a cosmopolitan gathering of feminists in Paris from all parts of the world—an Egyptian woman, a Chinese girl, an Indian, and others. While León admits that they follow a noble ideal, he presents through the character of Julio Gazul some very pointed criticisms of them. In their preoccupation with political movements they have lost their delicacy of sentiment and have become entangled in the ridiculous mesh of modern apostasies such as socialism and communism. He scorns their frantic efforts to ape man's ways and costume: "They know less of love than of politics, less of culinary skill than of cosmetics, less of modesty than of flirting."⁹⁵ Still, Gazul's interlocutor, also expressing the author's opinions, hopes that these characteristics of the modern woman may be merely the accidents of a transition and that the new woman of the future may truly be nobler, freer, and happier.

⁹³ *Europa trágica*, p. 406.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

⁹⁵ *Los trabajadores de la muerte*, p. 364.

This hopeful-yet-doubtful attitude toward the emancipation of women is reflected also in one of his best-drawn characters, Clara Taylor, in *Amor de caridad*. The daughter of an English father and an Andalusian mother, she is charming, vivacious, and intelligent. She has been brought up with a freedom unusual in Spain, and, as a result, is frank and energetic. With somewhat romantic impulses she sallies forth to live as an emancipated woman, free from the ties of matrimony, home, or family. She travels widely, tries her hand at many different professions, and experiences economic independence. But all this results only in disillusion. After several years of the "free life" she feels the need of a deep and true love, which she had never experienced in her wanderings, and realizes that her life has been essentially empty and bereft of meaning. Although she plays a more or less villainous role in the novel, she is a convincing character and her dilemma is sympathetically presented.

One of the fears concerning the changing status of women which seems to be uppermost in the mind of León during recent years is that the institution of the family will suffer therefrom. In a novel published in 1929 he pictures a scene at a fashionable beach resort in northern Spain where immodestly clothed women mingle freely with men, without inhibitions, and without a sense of inferiority: "The old Spanish home is dissolving like the salt foam of the waves; here even mothers are indistinguishable from their daughters." Under the Communist regime envisaged in *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, women are accorded equal opportunity with men in the government and in all other phases of public life. The result is revolting to León: women have become masculine in appearance and habits. The few that do not lose their feminine qualities emphasize the fact by a display of unbridled sensuality.⁹⁶ Free

⁹⁶ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, pp. 256-57.

love is made official, and family life is systematically being destroyed. All this forms an integral part of a system of ideas which León finds entirely detestable.

It may be repeated that León's attitude on this question follows approximately the same curve as does that of Baroja. Both, in their earlier writings, were ardent disciples of feminism, and both have been more or less disappointed or disquieted by the trend which the emancipation of women has actually taken. León and Baroja, as they near the end of their lives, feel a certain alarm at the modern woman and her habits.

EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE

In his novels and essays León seldom has occasion to discuss very fully the problems of education and agriculture, both of which are such significant factors in a consideration of Spanish liberalism. One of the rare references which he makes to specific aspects of education is included in the picture of a Communist Spain in *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*. His description of education under radical rule is a summary of all the pedagogical theories which he considers dangerous. The old system of secondary schools and universities has been abolished by the syndicates of Red students and teachers. Primary instruction is coeducational in the "Jardines de Infancia," "hives of atheism, corruption, and barbarism." Secondary and higher institutions of learnings are merged into "Colonias de Educación Sindical," where the instructional emphasis is placed on economics, sociology, physical culture, and the technical arts. León calls them "barracks for a sad youth." The faculties of philosophy, laws, and the liberal arts have been abolished. To supplement the "Colonias" the proletarian government has provided traveling cultural units and centers in addition to Athenaeums everywhere.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ *Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, pp. 170-71.

Caricatured in this prophecy of the future are certain ideas actually carried out by the Republican government after 1931: the "Jardines de Infancia" represent experiments made under the Republic in kindergarten work; the traveling cultural units doubtless are the Misiones Pedagógicas which actually were established to spread culture by means of pictures, exhibits, and plays taken to the rural districts of Spain. The subjects taught in the Communist schools of León's novel were, of course, suggested by educational trends in Russia. From this brief reference we may conclude, on scanty evidence to be sure, that León's educational ideals would reject coeducation, the secularization of education, and any tampering with the traditional curriculum.

At the root of these opinions there is a broader objection to modern educational trends growing from León's conflict with modern philosophy. In one of his essays he presents a sincere young student, intelligent and ardently interested in philosophy, who is seeking a basis for certainty in his life. He attends a school of the modern type, but the professors have nothing but destructive doubt and uncertainty to offer him. Instead of spiritual verities they lead him into the tortuous paths of pragmatism, where useful fictions are a substitute for eternal truths. León prophesies that his future will be representative of the terrible utilitarian and materialistic life which prevails in the modern world.⁹⁸

There is at least one important passage in his novels which indicates that he is fully aware of the gravity of the agricultural situation in Spain. In *El hombre nuevo*, Belén, an energetic young lady with a keen intelligence, goes to a large estate in Andalucía in the capacity of manager. At first, she is delighted with the sunshine and the generosity of nature in that charming region. But soon she discovers that behind the gay abun-

⁹⁸ *La voz de la sangre*, pp. 252-54.

dance of nature is the most deplorable human misery. Poverty, hunger, and rags go hand in hand with bountiful harvests. She is not slow in discovering the reason for the paradox: latifundia, hunting preserves, uncultivated fields, emigration, absentee landlordism, and unjust profits. The injustice of the landholding system, by means of which plutocratic financiers in Madrid reap the profits of the agricultural estates, is personified in Doña Belén's employer, Arráez; he is a stupid, immoral scoundrel who has nevertheless become a millionaire. He has formed a sort of agricultural trust through which he absorbed the small landholders and came to be an actual feudal lord over a whole district: now he holds the population entirely at his mercy.⁹⁹

The result of her experiences on the estate is to make Doña Belén a rabid social revolutionist. León obviously looks on her ideas, utopian and sincere to an extreme, with considerable sympathy; but, as I have explained, he cannot put any faith in the way of escape which she preaches.

RELIGION AND THE CHURCH

In almost every line of our discussion of Ricardo León it has been evident that religion in the form of Roman Catholicism plays a star role in the determination of his judgments. It is the hub about which revolves his whole social and political philosophy. So obvious has its importance been in the preceding pages that no attempt need be made here to give an exhaustive account of his religious thought. It will be sufficient to recapitulate briefly some of the applications of his religious philosophy in the novels. Certain of his character portraits reveal as vividly as anything the core of his religious convictions. A particularly effective, although shopworn, method which León regularly employs in his crusade against modern material-

⁹⁹ *El hombre nuevo*, pp. 169-72.

istic philosophy is that of portraying the sad plight of young men who have been led astray by the *Zeitgeist*. Such characters are so numerous in his novels that they become almost a conventional type. It is significant that many of them, puzzled, bewildered, and unsatisfied by the atheistic philosophy of modern times and our materialistic civilization, solve their resulting spiritual conflict through religious faith. As demonstrated in these sad, often neurotic, characters, León's primary answer to his archenemy is the simple one of trust in Divine Power.

His first novel, *Casta de hidalgos*, which, in many respects, remains his best, gives us perhaps the most carefully shaded and most typical characterization of unhappy, decadent youths. Jesús de Ceballos is a young man of noble lineage, who has deserted his traditional home to wander through the modern maze of sophisticated life in the cities and in foreign countries. He is infected with the maladies of the age: socialism, Nietzschean pessimism, and anarchy in metaphysics. Disillusioned and broken in health, he comes back to his peaceful, old-fashioned manorial home to seek spiritual rest. This he achieves only in a realization of the meaning of the Catholic faith, a realization which comes shortly before his death. In a melodramatic scene he says: ". . . how beautifully clear it all seems now! . . . I was living in the shadows . . . I fore-swore my destiny and my family . . . I walked in the darkness, consorting with shades and phantoms . . . late in life has my repentance come. May others learn from my experiences!"¹⁰⁰

In direct contrast to the sad case of Jesús are the *hidalgos* whom he introduces so frequently that they too become conventional types in his novels. In addition to being staunch patriots, as has been noted above, they are, of course, all de-

¹⁰⁰ *Casta de hidalgos*, p. 344.

vout Catholics, whose philosophy is tranquil and satisfying to them. Don Juan Manuel, the father of Jesús de Ceballos, says: ". . . . above everything the pride of my faith, the hope of dying as a Christian gentleman with a cross on my breast and the love of God in my heart, gives me strength and courage."¹⁰¹ Don Fernando Villalaz in *Amor de los amores* is not only an exceptionally devout *hidalgo*, but a mystic as well.¹⁰² Don Carlos de Araoz and his father before him were both faithful and loyal Christians.¹⁰³ And there are many others patterned on the same stern, religious model. They represent what is probably León's conception of the ideal man, his summary of the Spanish virtues, among which that of piety stands out pre-eminently.

Among the characters which display the religious virtues even more strikingly than the *hidalgos* are several members of the Jesuit order. For example, Padre Spinola in *Varón de deseos* had been a son of a wealthy family and had left his luxurious home to suffer the hardships of a missionary's life in the Philippines. León portrays him as a truly exemplary figure, strong spiritually and physically, self-denying, inspired by a divine ardor to work for the good of humanity.¹⁰⁴ It is noteworthy that the noblest priests in León's novels should be Jesuits, since they are precisely the group which has received the most criticism from Spanish anticlerical liberals. He refutes the current liberal attitude toward the Company of Jesus in direct and unmistakable terms: it is the crowning glory of Spain and the Church and has always represented the highest type of social discipline and genius, "a perfect democracy in the framework of a perfect aristocracy."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ *Casta de hidalgos*, p. 106.

¹⁰² *Amor de los amores*, p. 336.

¹⁰³ *Humos de rey*, pp. 262-63.

¹⁰⁴ *Varón de deseos*, pp. 131-37.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. III.

For the very reason that he esteems so highly the religious and pious spirit in the elderly *hidalgos* and the Jesuits, he is bitterly censorious of the hypocritical attitude toward religion common among certain Spaniards of the nobility. He flays without mercy the mechanical and external display of devotion which is but a mask for the worst paganism.¹⁰⁶ As an example of the type, he describes the character of the Duchess of Argenta. Wealthy, worldly-minded, vain, and immoral, she nevertheless makes an ostentatious show of piety. She justifies her bourgeois selfishness and the aristocratic luxury of her life on the grounds of divine right and God's grace.¹⁰⁷ Her husband is of the same type: an unscrupulous politician and a profligate Don Juan, who does not hesitate to sing the praises of religion, country, and the family.

His severe denunciation of religious hypocrisy is a most significant phase of León's attitude toward religion and the Catholic Church. In the case of Baroja and other anticlericals, we have seen that one of the principal points of attack against the Church is that it is a partner to the maintenance of social injustice in the status quo. It has been evident in various parts of my discussion of León that he is aware of the existence of social injustice and that he abhors the cruelty and the human misery created by some aspects of modern capitalism. It is especially important to note here that he is apparently also aware that religion, organized religion, has often been used as a cloak to justify certain decidedly unchristian aspects of the capitalist economic system, and that he has no sympathy with such an unholy alliance. He distinguishes what Baroja sometimes fails to distinguish—the difference between Catholicism as a hypocritical posture and genuine, sincere religious faith and exaltation.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

It is with the latter concept in mind that León declares on so many occasions that religion is the only true basis for a reconstruction of modern society. It is apropos at this point to review the numerous occasions on which we have noted the intimate relationship which exists between León's religious philosophy and his attitude toward social questions.

Modern progress and science are suspect to him largely because they have forsaken spiritual and Christian principles in favor of a materialistic interpretation of the world. His general theory of progress differs widely from the one which motivated Liberal activity in the nineteenth century, principally because he believes that no real progress is possible without spiritual regeneration through religion. His conception of democracy, such as it is, is closely linked with the traditional and thoroughly Catholic democratic institutions of medieval Spain. The only valid conception of liberty for León seems to be that of spiritual liberty, the liberty of the soul in mystic union with God. In judging the various political parties—the Liberals, the Republicans, the Socialists, and the Communists—his frame of reference and criteria nearly always concern their attitude toward the traditional Catholic faith: the Liberals were cursed by their atheistic origin; the Republicans are anticlerical; Marxism, in its philosophy and tactics, denies supernatural authority. León is an intense nationalist partly because he sees in Spain the defender of the true Faith; his admiration for militarism is linked with his vision of the Spanish soldier as the propagator of Catholicism. Freedom for women is acceptable to him until it impinges on the Church's code of morality, and many modern ideas of education are odious to him because they are branded with an irreligious orientation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

WE HAVE FOLLOWED in some detail the confusing maze of social opinion in two novelists of contemporary Spain. The picture, of course, is incomplete. In the process of dissection we have necessarily disregarded the warm, human outlines which each novel, regarded as an artistic unit, possesses. If the results of our survey seem chaotic, fragmentary, contradictory, we must remember that the novelist does not hold as his primary aim the construction of a handbook of social theory.

However, one factor stands out with striking clarity: the novels of both authors seethe with social ferment. The social destiny of Spain is a theme that appears consistently throughout their works, and problems which are not confined to Spain are eagerly and passionately discussed in nearly every volume. To return to our original question, can we see in this labyrinth of discussion and conflicting opinions any clue regarding the nature and position of Spanish liberalism? Can either of the authors be considered a liberal in his approach to the Spanish social scene? In order to reach any conclusions concerning these questions, it will be necessary to refer back to our differentiation in the connotations of liberalism.

The use of liberalism in a general sense to mean an attitude of mind might be termed a historical connotation. That is, its primary content has to do with certain trends of philosophical thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which mark the historical inception of liberalism. These trends may be loosely summed up in the term "rationalism." The typical rationalistic *Weltanschauung* involved two basic assumptions which were intimately related to each other: (1) The universe is governed by natural law; working in accordance with that

law, man in his terrestrial existence can progress indefinitely toward perfect happiness. (2) Reason, as distinguished from the will and the emotions, is a reliable guide for arriving at absolute truth concerning natural law and for utilizing that knowledge to promote human progress and happiness.

While these assumptions, definitely formulated during the Enlightenment, were of fundamental importance to the origin of the later and more specific forms of liberalism, few contemporary thinkers, liberal or otherwise, pretend to accept them as entirely valid.¹ Baroja and León are no exceptions. Each, for his own reasons, disagrees with the characteristic doctrines of rationalism.

It is true that in a certain sense of the word Baroja may be called a rationalist. Particularly in his attitude toward revealed religion, he follows the skeptical school of the French eighteenth-century rationalists. First the deists, nourished by the growing knowledge of the physical world and by the internal struggles of the Church, undermined the authority of the Catholic Church as the repository of revealed wisdom. The God of the Middle Ages gave way among them to the God of the Enlightenment, a Divinity shorn of his power to interfere in the mechanism of a universe once established by him but severely limited by his own laws. From this attitude toward the Church's doctrines of Divine Providence and revelation it was but a step to professed atheism or skepticism. Ridicule of the Bible and incredulity toward the supernatural aspects of revealed religion led naturally to doubt and to denial that God exists. These doubts found their typical expression in d'Alembert, Diderot, d'Holbach, and Helvetius. All of these *philosophes* were noted, however, for their interest in morality. One of their professed reasons for rejecting orthodox religion

¹ C. L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), pp. 29-31.

was the desire to establish a more beneficial and scientific moral code.²

Baroja's attack on the Catholic Church in Spain might easily have been formulated among the skeptical *philosophes* of eighteenth-century France, although the Spanish novelist is less coherent and more venomous. He rejects the Catholic doctrines as superstitious and unscientific; like the *philosophes*, he accuses the Church of fostering an inadequate moral code. It is especially significant for the matter in hand to repeat that Baroja is at heart a moralist; he is not indifferent to the way in which people lead their lives; all through his books there are judgments concerning the goodness or badness of human actions and programs. He expresses a nostalgic longing for a definite and scientific standard of moral conduct. It is evident that this attitude, as well as his campaign against revealed religion, Catholic or Protestant, is in the rationalistic tradition which fathered liberalism.

But other elements of the rationalist's world pattern are scorned by the Basque novelist. In direct contradiction to the notion cherished by the *philosophes* that the universe is one of order and law, Baroja says that it displays only chaos, the clashing of blind and purposeless forces. As a corollary, he refuses to believe that man is necessarily progressing toward perfection. He lacks the optimism, the belief in the intrinsic goodness of mankind which was prevalent among those early rationalists who sowed the seed of modern liberal thought. Nor does he share their conviction of the final and absolute authority of reason and intelligence.

It has been well pointed out by C. L. Becker that the eighteenth-century rationalist, in spite of his bitter struggle against the religious conception of authority, was much nearer to the medieval schoolman than he imagined. Both believed in the

² Preserved Smith, *A History of Modern Culture*, Vol. II, *The Enlightenment* (New York: Holt, 1934), chapter xiv.

possibility of knowing absolute truth, the churchman through Aristotle and divine revelation, the *philosophe* through scientific investigation of the laws of nature. But a common trend of modern thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries regards absolute truth as unattainable and doubts the efficacy of reason.³ Baroja reflects this current philosophy of relativism. The best, or at least the most representative, of his novels, *El árbol de la ciencia*, is really a prolonged meditation on the part of the author in which doubt of absolute standards and a questioning of the validity of the scientific and rationalistic world view are implicit on every page.

Baroja's pessimistic doubt of the possibility of comprehending absolute truth through reason is intimately related to the so-called philosophy of the will, which he apparently derived in large part from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. A keynote of Schopenhauer's philosophical system was subjectivism. Phenomena, as we see them, are only the representation of the subject. Reason has little place in his system; intuition is the most important of human faculties. Thus the Schopenhauerian *Weltanschauung* is directly opposed to rationalism. The opposition is even more apparent in his conception of the will as the essence of the world. His use of that conception implies that the world is a chaotic conflict of forces, impelled by a blind will, and leads naturally to the pessimism which is the principal characteristic of Schopenhauer's thought. The German philosopher's diatribes against the liberal belief in progress are well known. History is only repetition; its most important events are independent of any law. Moral progress is impossible because the center of the human being is will without moral purpose.⁴ Baroja has incorporated most of the elements

³ Becker, *op. cit.*, chapter i.

⁴ T. Ruyssen, *Schopenhauer* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1911), pp. 182-84.

of this attitude in his novels and essays, and many of his divergences from the original and typical premises of liberalism are ascribable to the influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

In the face of an unreasonable universe, dominated by an aimless force called will, Baroja has followed Nietzsche rather than Schopenhauer in evolving two defenses: the necessity of illusion for the sustenance of life, and the romance of the active life. The theme of illusion, which is brought out in *El árbol de la ciencia* and in some chapters of the autobiographical *Juventud, egolatría*, is a typically Nietzschean conception. The affiliation of the two authors in relation to this point will be most strikingly evident in a pair of parallel quotations:

Baroja: "The vital instinct has need of illusions in order to affirm itself. Consequently science, the critical instinct . . . should find one truth: the amount of illusion which is necessary to life."⁵

Nietzsche: "The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it . . . the question is how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps species-rearing . . . without recognition of logical fictions . . . man could not live—the renunciation of false opinions would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life."⁶

The motif of action is one of the most pregnant aspects of Baroja's philosophy. It is definitely his remedy for the pessimistic *Weltschmerz* which may result from a Schopenhauerian view of the world. Many of his novels, and particularly the historical series *Memorias de un hombre de acción*, are object lessons in the art of facing the absence of absolute values in a world pattern with the antidote of adventure and action, considered as ends in themselves. Furthermore, we have seen how this thirst for action has resulted at times in an intense

⁵ *El árbol de la ciencia*, p. 182.

⁶ *Beyond Good and Evil*, paragraph 4.

preoccupation for the heroic, regardless of the cause motivating the heroism. This accent on heroism is significant for the relation of Baroja to fundamental liberal assumptions, for it obviously shifts the emphasis from logical, reasoned concepts, suitable for building an ordered plan of social progress, to the personal, the adventurous, and the extravagant.

Of course, Baroja's devotion to the dynamic and heroic life is a development of the Nietzschean superman idea. Against the irrational world of ceaseless flux, Nietzsche set forth the ideal of the will to power, of the exaltation of strength and mastery, of proud, heroic resistance, all of which are ends in themselves.

In summary, Baroja's relation to the typical rationalism which in the eighteenth century gave a theoretical basis to liberalism is both positive and negative. His rationalistic opposition of science to religion is confused by a considerable degree of Nietzschean irrationalism.

The connection of Ricardo León with the rationalist trends is less complex than that of Baroja. León clearly recognizes the nexus between the philosophical currents of the Enlightenment and later liberal movements, and his rejection of both is unequivocal. The rationalists attacked the Church and its doctrines, which are so dear to him. For him, that attack in itself is sufficient to brand the *philosophes* and their followers outside of France as false prophets. He seems to be more aware than Baroja of the organic course of development which links the modern pragmatist's rejection of absolute values and the eighteenth-century deification of reason. On first thought, the relativity of pragmatism is the exact opposite of the optimistic, reasonable conception of an ordered universe held by the *philosophes*. But León shows the logical, perhaps inevitable, course which the assumption of human reason as a final guide has taken: distrust of revealed authority leads to eventual distrust of the authority of human reason itself.

He is particularly emphatic in his repudiation of the philosophy of the will and of action, which attracted Baroja so much. He understands it as a natural reaction against the intellectualism and analysis of the rationalists, but declares that it will end, as did rationalism, in bankruptcy. He has no more sympathy with modern philosophies of intuition and subjectivism, such as that of Bergson, which try to remedy the spiritual defects of pragmatism: ". . . . psychologies without the soul, mysticism without God, heresies, not only of the reason, but of the faith."⁷ To the rationalism of the early Liberals and the modern reactions to it (pragmatism and intuitionism) he opposes the Catholic philosophy: "Christian philosophy, definitively fixing the jurisdiction of the human intellect, draws away equally from dogmatism, rationalism, and universal skepticism." In doing so he actually approximates, in a sense, the rationalist outlook more closely than contemporary philosophical trends. Like the rationalists, he thinks in terms of absolute values. He declares that we must restore to the reason the authority which it once had. But he hastens to add that he means reason carefully limited in its functions by the wisdom of the Church, and not reason deified.⁸

It is plain, then, that both Baroja and León depart in their thinking from most of the basic premises of liberalism, as the word is used in its general, philosophical sense. But they base their disagreement on entirely distinct and mutually exclusive grounds. León's world pattern belongs in origin to the ages preceding rationalism, while Baroja's proceeds from an age later than the Enlightenment. León's philosophy is based on a divinely ordered universe, in which values are universal and absolute; its order is superhuman, controlled by forces outside of man, and to some extent beyond his ability to influence. Its

⁷ *La voz de la sangre*, p. 284.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 318-19.

values are apprehended not by human reason alone but by divine grace and revelation. Baroja's world is one of disorder, and it holds for us no absolute truths which may be ascertained and by which man can build a reasoned social order. León believes that a divine plan is working out a course of progress for mankind, but that the divine plan has little to do with the liberal view of progress as expressed by the rationalists. Baroja sees no justification for the idea that mankind has progressed in any real sense, or that it will do so in the future.

The second connotation of liberalism which we distinguished is represented by the Liberal parties and programs in various countries during the early and middle nineteenth century. Certain specific items of those programs are spurned by Baroja. Among them: the ideal of parliamentary democracy, the desire to foment mechanical progress in the belief that it represented a real progress for civilization, and nationalism. The rejection of these characteristic nineteenth-century doctrines is a corollary of the Nietzschean and Schopenhauerian thought which pervades Baroja's work.

León is likewise opposed to several of the early political dogmas of the Liberals. He has little sympathy with the ruthless effects which have been produced by laissez-faire capitalism, nor with its essentially materialistic conception of progress. Especially does he differ with the typical nineteenth-century Liberal on the question of Church versus State. The gravest sin of the Liberal parties in his eyes was their attempt to limit the secular power of the Catholic Church. It is clear that his frame of reference in judging the Liberal doctrines is totally different from that of Baroja. Since the Age of Reason the essential struggle in Europe, as he sees it, has been between the materialistic forces generated in rationalism, which bore fruit in nineteenth-century liberalism, and the everlasting spiritual truths embodied in the Church.

Both Baroja and León scoff at the nineteenth-century Lib-

eral and *Progresista* parties in Spain. Aside from the criticism of their professed doctrines, both express their disgust with the vacuity and the hypocrisy which they see in the movement.

Such are their divergences from historical liberalism. To what extent, if any, do their ideas coincide with those of liberalism? León, while he disapproves of certain manifestations of modern democracies, seems to hold democracy as a theoretical ideal, even though it is defined in medieval terms. In this he is not very far from the early Spanish Liberals and their faith in restricted parliamentary representation. They also feared democracy without restraints. León's nationalistic sentiments may be said to approach those of the Liberal patriots in Spain, Italy, and Germany. But the resemblance probably has no root in basic ideas.

The only real kinship which Pío Baroja has to the nineteenth-century Liberal is their mutual abhorrence of the restriction of personal thought and action by governments. This is an exceedingly important aspect of this discussion, since it touches the heart of Baroja's political attitudes. Among the early Liberals in the European nations this emphasis on personal liberty was made concrete in their zealous demands for freedom of speech and thought according to law, and in their insistence that the state should interfere with the individual and his business as little as possible. Baroja's passion for liberty takes the same point of departure as that of the Liberals; but with an impatience characteristic of him, he transcends the legalistic methods of the Liberals. The Liberal political programs conceived of a society from which would be shorn the repressions of tyranny, and which would guarantee the freedom of the individual by legal sanctions. Baroja seeks this freedom, not within the confines of society, at least as he knows it, but apart from society, with society as his enemy.⁹ The re-

⁹ César Barja, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

sult of the conflict of Baroja's individualism with social organization is seen in his consistently destructive attitude.

Baroja's thirst for personal independence is reflected also in his lively interest in anarchism. I have shown that it is not correct to call Baroja an anarchist without strict qualification of the statement. But it is justifiable to say that there is a core of philosophical anarchism which appeals to his hatred of all forms of repression and coercion. It is this sentiment which links Baroja with both anarchism and liberalism. The latter, in certain of its phases (e.g., the writings of Herbert Spencer), is not essentially distinct from philosophical anarchism.

It is commonplace to say that the pristine passion of Liberals for freedom dies when their party comes to power and their doctrine becomes formalized. It is precisely at this point that Baroja parts company with historical liberalism. As an attitude of rebellion and criticism, he considers liberalism admirable; but crystallized in a positive formula or a political party in power it is anathema. This attitude generalized is perhaps the key to an appreciation of his political and social ideology. While Baroja's tendency to shy at political and social systems of any sort when they become embodied in parties and programs has been manifest in various parts of our discussion, the most complete summary of that tendency is to be found in one of his most recent essays: "All the social formulas and aphorisms which have any foundation at all in truth have been arbitrarily systematized and conventionalized by philosophers and politicians in order to provide a doctrine for the masses. Such a process of simplification in politics, in the sciences, and in the arts gives attractive results, to be sure, but it is filled with mistakes, falsehoods, and arbitrary generalizations. . . . It is curious how a few phrases or utopian dreams can befuddle the mind of man in such a way that he cannot talk reasonably."¹⁰

¹⁰ *Vitrina pintoresca*, pp. 237-41.

Baroja's steadfast individualism is an element which at the same time confuses and stimulates his readers. Accustomed, as most of us are, to expect an author to fit into one of the categories which we have made in our political catalogue, we are nonplused when Baroja refuses to be pigeonholed.

A sample difficulty, which we have noted, is the inconsistency of Baroja's tentative endorsement of dictatorships and his vaunted individualism. There seems to be no clear way of reconciling the contradiction, although one might explain it as a conflict between a native Spanish love for freedom and the authoritarian implications of Nietzsche's philosophy. We should remember that Nietzsche himself balanced elements of anarchism and despotism in a nice equilibrium. He dreamed of an autocracy of the select few who, by reason of their strength and intelligence, would wield unlimited power over their underlings. But within the charmed circle of the rulers absolute freedom would prevail. Each would be free from conventional bonds to develop to the extent of his abilities and capacities. Anarchical freedom for the few within the confines of a powerful oligarchy—perhaps that is also Baroja's ideal.

Some further light may be shed on this crucial contradiction by referring it to the analysis of Benedetto Croce. Croce brings together the various philosophies of action for action's sake, characteristic of certain followers and contemporaries of Nietzsche, under the term "activism," a way of thought which he considers as one of liberalism's greatest enemies.¹¹ Still, it shares a common inspiration with liberalism—the principle of liberty. But the final results of the activist mode of thought, according to Croce, are quite the opposite of those desired by liberalism. Liberty, in the activist's use of the term, leads to the lawless domination of the clever and the strong, but does not envisage liberty in the broader, social sense. In fact, the

¹¹ Benedetto Croce, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

usual result of activism in social action is the enslavement of the masses by a group of passionate individualists.

Baroja does not deify all of the characteristics of the activists, as described by Croce: nationalism and militarism, for example. But his aristocracy of the strong and the emphasis on the pragmatic value of action relate him to that group, and, in Croce's eyes, would probably exclude him from consideration as a kinsman of the historical Liberal.

In view of the shifting and controversial nature of our third connotation of liberalism, it would be rash to attempt any inclusive statement of relationship between it and the thought of Baroja and León. Liberalism in the twentieth century has manifested itself in so many diverse ways and there is so little agreement, even among professed liberals, concerning the specific content of their programs that we dare summarize the views of the Spanish novelists on several of the major issues only.

It may be safely said that a great part of contemporary liberal thought in Spain, as elsewhere, centers about a deep sense of the social injustice existent in modern capitalistic society. Both León and Baroja are keenly aware of that injustice, although Baroja has given it more emphasis. Neither is content with a social system which glorifies the wealthy middle classes at the expense of the poor. It is strange and unfortunate, however, that they should have devoted so little attention, comparatively, to that aspect of Spanish economy which offers the most distressing spectacle of social maladjustment—agriculture. Both recognize the gravity of the agrarian situation in Spain, and Baroja goes so far as to advance concrete suggestions for its amelioration; but neither is essentially a novelist of rural life.

Many neo-liberals believe that the evils of economic inequality and injustice can be remedied by varying degrees of governmental regulation of the national economic life. Baroja's

ideas on this subject are not always consistent, and range from an approving nod at dictatorship to a proposal for a sort of decentralized economic organization by clans. León, in recent novels at least, avoids any specific comment on the function of government in economic life, preferring to regard such matters as comparatively unimportant in the face of spiritual regeneration through religion.

To what extent the new liberalism is antagonistic to socialism and communism is a matter on which there is little agreement, either in Spain or in other countries. Croce probably represents a majority of liberals when he opposes liberalism and the Marxian programs as irreconcilable. At any rate, there is no doubt that both Baroja and León refuse to see in socialism or communism a solution for the question of social injustice.

Some degree of pacifism and antimilitarism is characteristic of modern liberal thought. Baroja is in unqualified agreement here with the neo-liberal; León's ideas are more ambiguous. Both novelists share with many contemporary liberals a theoretical advocacy of feminism. On the question of education, which is of peculiar interest for liberalism in modern Spain, Baroja and León differ greatly. Baroja joins the Spanish liberal in his condemnation of the Church's control of public education, but he seems not to believe with them in the possibility of social regeneration through universal education. León is militantly opposed to the secularization of the schools and the general liberal program of education.

Neither of the authors could be accurately called neo-liberal, even if we consider the variation of meanings which cluster about that appellation. They are inconsistent or silent on the concrete mode of solving the fundamental question which confronts the modern liberal—social injustice.

If the social ideas of Baroja and León are in any way

representative of political opinion in their country, we can scarcely view with optimism the future of liberalism in Spain. The events of the past year most decidedly have not encouraged an optimistic view of liberalism's fate in that war-torn land. The civil war offers a picture of bloody extremes, in which the rebels, who are avowedly conservative and inclined to a reactionary dictatorship, are fighting without quarter against a government which sometimes seems to be more radical than liberal. Why there seems to be no middle ground and why liberalism as a social philosophy of peaceful change is all but lost in the turmoil are questions which are partially explained by the attitudes exemplified in Baroja and León.

The novels of León go far to interpret the ideology which motivated those who supported the revolt of July 1936. The liberalism of the Second Republic was hateful to them because it threatened to curtail the power of the Church, because it attempted to lessen the prestige of the army, and because its reforms were antitraditional. The Socialist support of the Republic in its initial years and the Marxian elements of the Popular Front in February 1936 made Spaniards of León's temperament panicstricken. Certainly Spanish liberalism could expect little encouragement at their hands.

From Baroja, who has professed to be a liberal, one might hope for more friendly treatment toward liberal effort in modern Spain. He was obviously as anticlerical as the most fervent Republican; he had no love for the army; his realization of the need for reforms to correct social injustice was sharp. Yet he was resolutely opposed to the work of the Second Republic, and, in time of crisis, he espoused the cause of a reactionary rebellion, even though he did so without fervor. Our examination of the type of "liberalism" represented by Baroja makes it clear why his attitude is not paradoxical. He conceives of liberalism in a purely negative sense. It is synonymous with destructive criticism. Baroja appar-

ently is unable to identify himself for long with any group dedicated to realizing liberal social change. He is the personification of the legendary Spanish individualism carried to its logical extreme. If many of his fellow-Spaniards are similar to Baroja in this respect—and there is reason to suspect that such is the case—it is easy to see why Spanish liberalism in practice has failed to achieve unity, why it so often has shattered into bickering groups, why it has been all but crushed between Fascist conservatism and Anarcho-Syndicalist radicalism.

APPENDIX

THE FOLLOWING lists include only the works of Baroja and León utilized in this study, arranged in order of first publication date.

PÍO BAROJA

NOVELS

- El mayorazgo de Labraz* (Barcelona: Henrich, 1903), 303 pages.
Camino de perfección (Madrid: Caro Raggio, n.d.), 271 pages.
Aventuras, inventos y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox
(Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1919), 301 pages.
La busca (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1917), 321 pages.
Mala hierba (Madrid: Caro Raggio, n.d.), 297 pages.
Aurora roja (Madrid: Caro Raggio, n.d.), 297 pages.
La feria de los discretos (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1930), 352
pages.
Paradox, rey (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1917), 249 pages.
Los últimos románticos (Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando,
1906), 318 pages.
Las tragedias grotescas (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1920), 274 pages.
La dama errante (Madrid: Ricardo Rojas, 1908), 257 pages.
La ciudad de la niebla (Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando,
1909), 311 pages.
César o nada (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1927), 345 pages.
El árbol de la ciencia (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1929), 343 pages.
El mundo es así (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1912), 320 pages.
El aprendiz de conspirador (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1913),
283 pages.
Con la pluma y con el sable (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1925), 310
pages.
La sensualidad pervertida (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1920), 393
pages.

- El gran torbellino del mundo* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1926), 339 pages.
- Las veleidades de la fortuna* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1926), 299 pages.
- Las máscaras sangrientas* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1927), 334 pages.
- Los amores tardíos* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1927), 213 pages.
- El nocturno del hermano Beltrán* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1929), 256 pages.
- La familia de Errotacho* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1932), 304 pages.
- Los visionarios* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1932), 312 pages.

ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

- El tablado de Arlequín* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, n.d.), 206 pages.
- Nuevo tablado de Arlequín* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1917), 240 pages.
- Juventud, egolatría* (2d edition. Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1920), 342 pages.
- Las horas solitarias* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1918), 419 pages.
- Momentum catastrophicum* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1919), 90 pages.
- La caverna del humorismo* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1919), 362 pages.
- Divagaciones sobre la cultura* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1920), 85 pages.
- "Divagaciones de autocrítica," *Revista de Occidente*, IV (1924), 33-59. Reprinted in *Divagaciones apasionadas*.
- Divagaciones apasionadas* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1927), 257 pages.
- Entretenimientos* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1927), 81 pages.
- Siluetas románticas* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1934), 306 pages.
- Vitrina pintoresca* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1935), 281 pages.

- "Amenidades comunistas," *Ahora*, February 3, 1935, p. 5.
 "Las razas nobles," *Ahora*, February 10, 1935, p. 7.
 "La sabiduría comunista," *Ahora*, February 24, 1935, p. 5.
 "La familia y sus víctimas," *Ahora*, March 24, 1935, p. 7.
 "La insensatez y la cuquería," *Ahora*, March 31, 1935, p. 5.
 "Las épocas revolucionarias," *Ahora*, April 7, 1935, p. 5.
 "The Mistakes of the Spanish Republic," *Living Age*, CCCLI (1937), 422-26.

RICARDO LEÓN

NOVELS

- Casta de hidalgos* (12th edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1931), 347 pages.
Alcalá de los Zegries (Madrid: Raoul Péant, 1915), 441 pages.
Amor de los amores (16th edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1931), 367 pages.
Los centauros (6th edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1927), 345 pages.
Amor de caridad (5th edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1930), 302 pages.
Humos de rey (4th edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1929), 303 pages.
El hombre nuevo (2d edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1927), 364 pages.
Cuentos de antaño y hogaño (2d edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1927), 281 pages.
Los trabajadores de la muerte (Madrid: Hernando, 1927), 406 pages.
Jauja (Madrid: Hernando, 1926), 362 pages.
Varón de deseos (Madrid: Hernando, 1929), 292 pages.
Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros (Madrid: Hernando, 1932), 291 pages.
Roja y gualda (Madrid: Hernando, 1934), 319 pages.

ESSAYS

Los caballeros de la cruz (6th edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1926), 330 pages.

La escuela de los sofistas (7th edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1925), 291 pages.

Europa trágica (Edición definitiva en un solo volumen. Madrid: Hernando, 1929), 433 pages.

La voz de la sangre (3d edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1927), 323 pages.

La capa del estudiante (2d edition. Madrid: Hernando, 1929), 318 pages.

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